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OBSER-

OBSERVATIONS

ON

MAN, &c.

IN TWO PARTS.

PART II.

Containing OBSERVATIONS *on the* DUTY *and* EXPECTATIONS *of* MANKIND.

.....

INTRODUCTION.

WHATEVER be our doubts, fears, or anxieties, whether ſelfiſh our ſocial, whether for time or eternity, our only hope and refuge muſt be in the infinite power, knowledge, and goodneſs of God. And if theſe be really our hope and refuge, if we have a true practical ſenſe and conviction of God's infinite ability and readineſs to protect and bleſs us; an entire, peaceful, happy reſignation will be the reſult, notwithſtanding the clouds and perplexities wherewith we may ſometimes be encompaſſed. He who has brought us into this ſtate, will conduct us through it: he knows all our wants and diſtreſſes: his infinite nature will

bear down all oppoſition from our impotence, ignorance, vice, or miſery: he is our creator, judge, and king, our friend, and father, and God.

And though the tranſcendent greatneſs and glorioufneſs of this proſpect may, at firſt view, make our faith ſtagger, and incline us to diſbelieve through joy; yet, upon farther conſideration, it ſeems rather to confirm and eſtabliſh itſelf on that account; for the more it exceeds our gratitude and comprehenſion, the more does it coincide with the idea of that abſolutely perfect being, whom the ſeveral orders of imperfect beings perpetually ſuggeſt to us, as our only reſting place, the cauſe of cauſes, and the ſupreme reality.

However, on the other hand, it muſt be acknowledged, that the evils which we ſee and feel are ſtrong arguments of the poſſibility of ſtill greater evils, of any finite evils whatever, and of their conſiſtency with the divine attributes. All finites are equally nothing in reſpect of infinite; and if the infinite power, knowledge, and goodneſs of God can permit the leaſt evil, they may permit any finite degree of it, how great ſoever, for any thing that we know to the contrary. And this moſt alarming conſideration cannot but compel every thinking perſon to uſe his utmoſt endeavours, firſt for his own preſervation and deliverance; and then, in proportion to his benevolence, for the preſervation and deliverance of others.

Nor can ſuch a perſon long heſitate what method to take in the general. The duties of piety, benevolence, and ſelf-government, conſidered in the general, have had ſuch a ſtamp ſet upon them by all ages and nations, by all orders and conditions of men, approve themſelves ſo much to our frame and conſtitution, and are ſo evidently conducive to both public and private happineſs here, that one cannot doubt of their procuring for us not only ſecurity, but our *ſummum bonum*, our greateſt poſſible happineſs,

during

during the whole courſe of our exiſtence, whatever that be.

Theſe are the genuine dictates of what is called natural religion. But we, who live in chriſtian countries, may have recourſe to far clearer light, and to a more definite rule: the chriſtian revelation is atteſted by ſuch evidences hiſtorical, prophetical, and moral, as will give abundant comfort and ſatisfaction to all who ſeek them earneſtly. A future life, with indefinite, or even infinite, rewards and puniſhments, is ſet before us in expreſs terms, the conditions declared, examples related both to encourage our hopes, and alarm our fears, and aſſurances of aſſiſtance and mercy delivered in the ſtrongeſt and moſt pathetic terms.

Yet ſtill there are difficulties both in the word of God, and in his works; and theſe difficulties are ſometimes ſo magnified, as to lead to ſcepticiſm, infidelity, or atheiſm. Now, the contemplation of our own frame and conſtitution appears to me to have a peculiar tendency to leſſen theſe difficulties attending natural and revealed religion, and to improve their evidences, as well as to concur with them in their determination of man's duty and expectations. With this view, I drew up the foregoing obſervations on the frame and connection of the body and mind; and, in proſecution of the ſame deſign, I now propoſe,

Firſt, To proceed upon this foundation, and upon the other phænomena of nature to deduce the evidences for the being and attributes of God, and the general truths of natural religion.

Secondly, Laying down all theſe as a new foundation, to deduce the evidences for revealed religion.

Thirdly, To inquire into the rule of life, and the particular applications of it, which reſult from the frame of our natures, the dictates of natural religion, and the precepts of the ſcriptures taken

together, compared with, and caſting light upon each other. And,

Fourthly, To inquire into the genuine doctrines of natural and revealed religion thus illuſtrated, concerning the expectations of mankind, here and hereafter, in conſequence of their obſervance or violation of the rule of life.

I do not preſume to give a complete treatiſe on any of theſe ſubjects; but only to borrow from the many excellent writings, which have been offered to the world on them, ſome of the principal evidences and deductions, and to accommodate them to the foregoing theory of the mind; whereby it may appear, that though the doctrines of aſſociation and mechaniſm do make ſome alterations in the method of reaſoning on religion, yet they are far from leſſening either the evidences for it, the comfort and joy of religious perſons, or the fears of irreligious ones.

OBSERVATIONS

ON

MAN,

HIS FRAME, HIS DUTY, AND HIS EXPECTATIONS.

CHAP. I.

Of the BEING *and* ATTRIBUTES *of* GOD, *and of* NATURAL RELIGION.

PROP. I.

Something muſt have exiſted from all Eternity; or, there never was a Time when Nothing exiſted.

FOR, when we place ourſelves in ſuch an imaginary point of time, and then try to conceive how a world, finite or infinite, ſhould begin to exiſt, abſolutely without cauſe, we find an inſtantaneous and irreſiſtible check put to the conception, and we are compelled at once to reject the ſuppoſition: ſo that the manner in which we reject it, is a proper authority for doing ſo. It is ſuperfluous, in this caſe, to inquire into the nature of this check and rejection, and diſſent grounded thereon; ſince, after all our inquiries, we muſt ſtill find an inſuperable reluctance to aſſent. The ſuppoſition will not remain in the mind, but is

thrown out immediately; and I do not ſpeak of this, as what ought to follow from a proper theory of evidence and aſſent, but as a fact, which every man feels, whatever his notions of logic be, or whether he has any or no; and I appeal to every man for the truth of this fact. Now, no truth can have a greater reality to us, nor any falſehood a greater evidence againſt it, than this inſtantaneous, neceſſary aſſent or diſſent. I conclude, therefore, that there never was a time when nothing exiſted; or, in other words, that ſomething muſt have exiſted from all eternity.

PROP. II.

There cannot have been a mere Succeſſion of finite dependent Beings from all Eternity; but there muſt exiſt, at leaſt, one infinite and independent Being.

If an infinite ſucceſſion of finite dependent beings be poſſible, let *M*, *N*, *O*, &c. repreſent the ſeveral links of this chain or ſeries; *N* is therefore the mere effect of *M*, *O* of *N*, &c. as we deſcend; and as we aſcend, *M* is the effect of *L*, *L* of *K*, &c. Each particular being, therefore, is a mere effect; and therefore the ſuppoſition of ſuch a ſucceſſion finite *à parte ante*, would be rejected immediately according to the laſt propoſition, ſince *A* the firſt term, would be an effect abſolutely without a cauſe. And the ſame thing holds, whatever number of terms be added *à parte ante*. If, therefore, an infinite number be added (which I here ſuppoſe poſſible for argument's ſake), ſo that the ſeries may become infinite *à parte ante*, the ſame concluſion muſt be valid according to the analogy of all mathematical reaſonings

ſonings concerning infinites: ſince we do not approach to the poſſibility of this ſeries in any ſtep of our progreſs, but always remain in the ſame ſtate of utter inability to admit it, we can never arrive thither ultimately. Wherever the ultimate ratio of quantities, ſuppoſed then to be infinitely great or ſmall, is different from that of the ſame quantities ſuppoſed to be finite, there is a perpetual tendency to this ultimate ratio in every increaſe or diminution of the quantities: it follows, therefore, that an infinite ſucceſſion of mere finite dependent beings is impoſſible to us; which relative impoſſibility, as I obſerved before, is our *ne plus ultra*. Though we ſhould fancy relative impoſſibles to be poſſible *in themſelves*, as it is ſometimes phraſed, the utter rejection, which forces itſelf again and again upon the mind, when we endeavour to conceive them ſo, ſuppreſſes all naſcent tendencies to aſſent.

The ſame thing may be conſidered thus: if there be nothing more in the univerſe than a mere ſucceſſion of finite dependent beings, then there is ſome degree of finiteneſs ſuperior to all the reſt; but this is impoſſible, ſince no cauſe can be aſſigned for this degree rather than any other: beſides, this ſupreme finite being will want a cauſe of its exiſtence, ſince it is finite; which yet it cannot have, ſince all the reſt are inferior to it.

Or thus: if an infinite ſucceſſion of finite beings be poſſible, let us ſuppoſe it in men: it will be neceſſary, however, to ſuppoſe one or more beings ſuperior to man, on account of the exquiſiteneſs of his frame of body and mind, which is far above his own power to execute, and capacity to comprehend: and if this being or beings be not infinite, we muſt have recourſe to a ſecond infinite ſucceſſion of finite beings. But then it will be natural to ſuppoſe, that theſe beings, though able to comprehend man through their ſuperior faculties, cannot compre-

hend themſelves, and ſo on till we come to an infinite being, who alone can comprehend himſelf.

There are many other arguments and methods of reaſoning of the ſame kind with thoſe here delivered, which lead to the ſame concluſion; and they all ſeem to turn upon this, that as all finite beings require a ſuperior cauſe for their exiſtence and faculties, ſo they point to an infinite one, as the only real cauſe, himſelf being uncauſed. He is, therefore, properly denominated independent, ſelf-exiſtent, and neceſſarily exiſtent; terms which import nothing more, when applied to the Deity, than the denial of a foreign cauſe of his exiſtence and attributes; notwithſtanding that theſe words, on account of their different derivations, and relations to other words, may ſeem to have a different import, when applied to the Deity.

If it be objected, that a cauſe is required for an infinite being, as well as for a finite one; I anſwer, that though the want of a cauſe for finite beings, with other arguments to the ſame purpoſe, leads us neceſſarily to the conſideration and admiſſion of an infinite one; yet, when we are arrived there, we are utterly unable to think or ſpeak properly of him: however, one would rather judge, that, for the ſame reaſon that all finiteneſs requires a cauſe, infinity is incompatible with it.

If it be ſuppoſed poſſible for a man, through logical and metaphyſical perplexities, or an unhappy turn of mind, not to ſee the force of theſe and ſuch like reaſonings, he muſt, however, be at leaſt *in æquilibrio* between the two oppoſite ſuppoſitions of the propoſition, viz. that of an infinite ſucceſſion of finite dependent beings, and that of an infinite independent being. In this caſe, the teſtimony of all ages and nations, from whatever cauſe it ariſes, and of the ſcriptures, in favour of the laſt ſuppoſition, ought to have ſome weight, ſince ſome credibility

bility muſt be due to theſe, in whatever light they be conſidered. If, therefore, they have no weight, this may ſerve to ſhew a man, that he is not ſo perfectly *in æquilibrio*, as he may fancy.

This propoſition will alſo be confirmed by the following. My chief deſign under it has been to produce the abſtract metaphyſical arguments for the exiſtence of an infinite independent being. Some of theſe are more ſatisfactory to one perſon, ſome to another; but in all there is ſomething of perplexity and doubt concerning the exact propriety of expreſſions, and method of reaſoning, and perhaps ever will be; ſince the ſubject is infinite, and we finite. I have given what appears moſt ſatisfactory to myſelf; but without the leaſt intention to cenſure the labours of others upon this important ſubject. If we underſtood one another perfectly, not only our concluſions, but our methods of arriving at them, would probably appear to coincide. In the mean time, mutual candour will be of great uſe for the preventing the ill effects of this branch of the confuſion of tongues.

PROP. III.

The infinite independent Being is endued with infinite Power and Knowledge.

THIS Propoſition follows from the foregoing; it being evident, that moſt or all the ways there delivered, or referred to, for proving an infinite being, do, at the ſame time, prove the infinity of his power and knowledge. To ſuppoſe a being without any power, or any knowledge, is, in effect, to take away his exiſtence after it has been allowed. And to ſuppoſe an infinite being with only finite power, or finite knowledge, is ſo diſſonant to the analogy of language, and of the received method of reaſoning, that it muſt be rejected by the mind.

But

But the infinity of the divine power and knowledge may alſo be proved in many independent ways, and theſe proofs may be extended, in a contrary order, to infer the foregoing propoſition.

Thus, Firſt; When a man conſiders the ſeveral orders of ſentient and intelligent beings below him, even in the moſt tranſient way, and aſks himſelf whether or no mankind be the higheſt order which exiſts within the whole *compaſs of nature*, as we term it, he cannot but reſolve this queſtion in the negative; he cannot but be perſuaded, that there are beings of a power and knowledge ſuperior to his own, as well as inferior. The idea, the internal feeling, of the actual exiſtence of ſuch beings forces itſelf upon the mind, adheres inſeparably to, and coaleſces with, the reflection upon the inferior orders of beings, which he ſees. Farther, as we can perceive no limits ſet to the deſcending ſcale, ſo it is natural, even at firſt view, to imagine, that neither has the aſcending ſcale any limits; or, in other words, that there actually exiſts one, or more beings, endued with infinite power and knowledge.

Secondly, When we contemplate the innumerable inſtances and evidences of boundleſs power, and exquiſite ſkill, which appear every where in the organs and faculties of animals, in the make and properties of the vegetable and mineral kingdoms, in the earth, water, and air of this globe, in the heavenly bodies, in light, gravity, electricity, magnetiſm, the attraction of coheſion, &c. &c. with the manifeſt adaptations and ſubſerviencies of all theſe things to each other, in ſuch manner as to ſhew both the moſt perfect knowledge of them, and of all their properties, and the moſt abſolute command over them; when we conſider alſo that vaſt extent of theſe effects of power and knowledge, which teleſcopes, microſcopes, and the daily obſervations and experiments of mankind, open to our view; the real exiſtence,

exiſtence, firſt, of power and knowledge far beyond human conception, and then, of thoſe that are actually infinite, forces itſelf upon the mind, by the cloſe connection and indiſſoluble union between the ſeveral ideas here mentioned.

For, Thirdly, Though no finite being can comprehend more than the finite effects of power and knowledge; nay, though to ſuppoſe infinite effects, *i. e.* an infinite univerſe, is thought by ſome to involve a contradiction, to be the ſame thing as ſuppoſing an actually infinite number; yet it appears to me, that the other branch of the dilemma repels us with the greateſt force. To ſuppoſe a finite univerſe, is to ſuppoſe a ſtop where the mind cannot reſt; we ſhall always aſk for a cauſe of this finiteneſs, and, not finding any, reject the ſuppoſition. Now, if the univerſe be ſuppoſed infinite, this proves at once the abſolute infinity of the divine power and knowledge, provided we allow them to follow in a finite degree, from the finite evidences of power and knowledge, in that part of the univerſe which is preſented to our view.

As to the foregoing objection to the infinity of the univerſe, we may obſerve, that it ariſes merely from the finiteneſs of our comprehenſions. We can have no conception of any thing infinite, nor of the poſſibility that any other being, conceived by us, can conceive this, &c. &c. But all this vaniſhes, when we come to conſider, that there actually is, that there neceſſarily muſt be, an infinite being. This being may conceive his own infinite works, and he alone can do it. His own infinite nature, which we cannot but admit, is as much above conception as the infinity of his works. And all apparent contradictions, in theſe things, ſeem to flow merely from our uſing the words denoting infinity, of which we can neither have any idea, nor any definition, but by equivalent terms, like thoſe words of which we have ideas

ideas or definitions. In the ſame manner as when the conditions of an algebraic problem are impoſſible, the unknown quantity comes out indeed by the reſolution of the equation under an algebraic form, as in other caſes; but then this form, when examined, is found to include an impoſſibility.

As the infinity of the divine power and knowledge may be deduced from that of the univerſe, ſo the laſt may be deduced from the firſt, ſuppoſed to be proved by other arguments. And it may be obſerved in general, upon all inquiries into this ſubject, that the mind cannot bear to ſuppoſe either God or his works finite, however unable we may be to think or ſpeak of them properly, when they are ſuppoſed to be infinite.

Fourthly, As it appears from the train of reaſoning uſed in this and the foregoing propoſition, that an infinite being is abſolutely neceſſary for the exiſtence of the viſible world, as its creator; ſo the conſideration of this leads us to the infinity of his power and knowledge. The things created muſt be merely paſſive, and ſubject entirely to the will of him who created them. In like manner, all the powers and properties of created things, with all the reſults of theſe, in their mutual applications, through all eternity, muſt be known to him. And this follows in whatever manner we conſider creation, of which we can certainly form no juſt idea. It is evident, as juſt now mentioned, that an author of this world is abſolutely required; alſo, that this author muſt have been from all eternity. It is therefore moſt natural for us to conclude, that there have been infinite effects of his almighty power from all eternity. But then this does not exclude creations in time, I mean of things made from nothing. For it ſeems to me, that our narrow faculties cannot afford us the leaſt foundation for ſuppoſing the creation of things from nothing impoſſible to God.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, There is a great acceſſion of evidence for the infinity of the divine power and knowledge, and for the creation of all things by God, and their entire ſubjection to him, from the declarations of the ſcriptures to this purpoſe. This acceſſion of evidence can ſcarce be neceſſary in this age; but, in the infancy of the world, revelation ſeems to have been the chief or only foundation of faith in any of the divine attributes. And even now, it cannot but be matter of the greateſt comfort and ſatisfaction to all good men, to have an independent evidence for theſe important truths; and that more eſpecially, if their minds have been at all perplexed with the metaphyſical diſputes and ſubtleties, which are often ſtarted on theſe ſubjects.

PROP. IV.

God is infinitely benevolent.

As all the natural attributes of God may be comprehended under power and knowledge, ſo benevolence ſeems to comprehend all the moral ones. This propoſition therefore, and the foregoing, contain the fundamentals of all that reaſon can diſcover to us concerning the divine nature and attributes.

Now, in inquiring into the evidences for the divine benevolence, I obſerve, firſt, that as we judge of the divine power and knowledge by their effects in the conſtitution of the viſible world, ſo we muſt judge of the divine benevolence in the ſame way. Our arguments for it muſt be taken from the happineſs, and tendencies thereto, that are obſervable in the ſentient beings, which come under our notice.

Secondly, That the miſery, to which we ſee ſentient beings expoſed, does not deſtroy the evidences for the divine benevolence, taken from happineſs, unleſs we ſuppoſe the miſery equal or ſuperior to the happineſs. A being who receives three degrees of happineſs,

happineſs, and but one of miſery, is indebted for two degrees of happineſs to his Creator. Hence our inquiry into the divine benevolence is reduced to an inquiry into the balance of happineſs, or miſery, conferred, or to be conferred, upon the whole ſyſtem of ſentient beings, and upon each individual of this great ſyſtem. If there be reaſon to believe, that the happineſs which each individual has received, or will receive, be greater than his miſery, God will be benevolent to each being, and infinitely ſo to the whole infinite ſyſtem of ſentient beings; if the balance be infinitely in favour of each individual, God will be infinitely benevolent to each, and infinito-infinitely to the whole ſyſtem.

It is no objection to this reaſoning, that we deſire pure happineſs, and prefer it to an equal balance of happineſs mixed with miſery; or that the conſideration of miſery, amidſt the works of an infinitely benevolent being, gives us perplexity. For this diſappointment of our deſires, and this perplexity, can amount to no more than finite evils, to be deducted from the ſum total of happineſs; and our obligations to the author of our beings muſt always be in proportion to this remaining ſum. We may add, that as this diſappointment and perplexity are ſources of miſery at preſent, they may, in their future conſequences, be much ampler ſources of happineſs; and that this ſeems to be the natural reſult of ſuppoſing, that happineſs prevails over miſery.

Thirdly, Since the qualities of benevolence and malevolence are as oppoſite to one another, as happineſs and miſery, their effects, they cannot co-exiſt in the ſame ſimple unchangeable being. If therefore we can prove God to be benevolent, from the balance of happineſs, malevolence muſt be entirely excluded; and we muſt ſuppoſe the evils, which we ſee and feel, to be owing to ſome other cauſe, however unable we

may

may be to aſſign this cauſe, or form any conceptions of it.

Fourthly, Since God is infinite in power and knowledge, *i. e.* in his natural attributes, he muſt be infinite in the moral one alſo, *i. e.* he muſt be either infinitely benevolent, or infinitely malevolent. All arguments, therefore, which exclude infinite malevolence, prove the infinite benevolence of God.

Laſtly, As there are ſome difficulties and perplexities which attend the proofs of the divine ſelf-exiſtence, power, and knowledge, ſo it is natural to expect, that others equal, greater, or leſs, ſhould attend the conſideration of the divine benevolence. But here again revelation comes in aid of reaſon, and affords inexpreſſible ſatisfaction to all earneſt and well-diſpoſed perſons, even in this age, after natural philoſophy, and the knowledge of natural religion, have been ſo far advanced. In the early ages of the world, divine revelation muſt have been, almoſt the only influencing evidence of the moral attributes of God.

Let us now come to the evidences for the divine benevolence, and its infinity.

Firſt, then, It appears probable, that there is an over-balance of happineſs to the ſentient beings of this viſible world, conſidered both generally and particularly. For though diſorder, pain, and death, do very much abound every where in the world, yet beauty, order, pleaſure, life, and happineſs, ſeem to ſuperabound. This is indeed impoſſible to be aſcertained by any exact computation. However, it is the general opinion of mankind, which is ſome kind of proof of the thing itſelf. For ſince we are inclined to think, that happineſs or miſery prevails, according as we ourſelves are happy or miſerable (which both experience, and the foregoing doctrine of aſſociation, ſhew), the general prevalence of the opinion of happineſs is an argument of the general

general prevalence of the thing itſelf. Add to this, that the recollection of places, perſons, &c. which we have formerly known, is in general pleaſant to us. Now recollection is only the compound veſtige of all the pleaſures and pains, which have been aſſociated with the object under conſideration. It ſeems therefore, that the balance muſt have been in favour of pleaſure. And yet it may be, that ſmall or moderate actual pains are in recollection turned into pleaſures. But then this will become an argument, in another way, for the prevalence of the pleaſures, and particularly of thoſe of recollection, *i. e.* mental ones. It appears alſo, that the growth and health of the body infer the general prevalence of happineſs, whilſt they continue. Afterwards, the mental happineſs may over-balance the bodily miſery.

Secondly, If we ſhould lay down, that there is juſt as much miſery as happineſs in the world (more can ſcarce be ſuppoſed by any one), it will follow, that if the laws of benevolence were to take place in a greater degree than they do at preſent, miſery would perpetually decreaſe, and happineſs increaſe, till, at laſt, by the unlimited growth of benevolence, the ſtate of mankind, in this world, would approach to a paradiſiacal one. Now, this ſhews that our miſeries are, in a great meaſure, owing to our want of benevolence, *i. e.* to our moral imperfections, and to that which, according to our preſent language, we do and muſt call *ourſelves*. It is probable therefore, that, upon a more accurate examination and knowledge of this ſubject, we ſhould find, that our miſeries aroſe not only in great meaſure, but entirely, from this ſource, from the imperfection of our benevolence, whilſt all that is good comes immediately from God, who muſt therefore be deemed perfectly benevolent. And ſince the courſe of the world, and the frame of our natures are ſo ordered, and ſo adapted to each other, as to enforce benevolence upon us, this is a

farther

farther argument of the kind intentions of an overruling Providence. It follows hence, that malevolence, and conſequently miſery, muſt ever decreaſe.

Thirdly, All the faculties, corporeal and mental, of all animals, are, as far as we can judge, contrived and adapted both to the preſervation and well-being of each individual, and to the propagation of the ſpecies. And there is an infinite coincidence of all the ſeveral ſubordinate ends with each other, ſo that no one is ſacrificed to the reſt, but they are all obtained in the utmoſt perfection by one and the ſame means. This is a ſtrong argument for all the divine perfections, power, knowledge, and goodneſs. And it agrees with it, that final cauſes, *i. e.* natural good, are the beſt clue for guiding the invention in all attempts to explain the œconomy of animals.

Fourthly, As order and happineſs prevail in general more than their contraries, ſo when any diſorder, bodily or mental, does happen, one may obſerve, in general, that it produces ſome conſequences, which in the end rectify the original diſorder; and the inſtances where diſorders propagate and increaſe themſelves without viſible limits, are comparatively rare. Nay, it may be, that all the apparent ones of this kind are really otherwiſe; and that they would appear otherwiſe, were our views ſufficiently extenſive.

Fifthly, The whole analogy of nature leads us from the conſideration of the infinite power and knowledge of God, and of his being the creator of all things, to regard him as our father, protector, governor, and judge. We cannot therefore but immediately hope and expect from him benevolence, juſtice, equity, mercy, bounty, truth, and all poſſible moral perfections. Men of great ſpeculation and refinement may deſire to have this analogical reaſoning ſupported, and ſhewn to be valid; and it is very uſeful to do this as far as we are able. But it

carries great influence previouſly to ſuch logical inquiries; and even after them, though they ſhould not prove ſatisfactory, a perſon of a ſober and well-diſpoſed mind, would ſtill find himſelf affected by it in no inconſiderable degree. Such a perſon would be compelled, as it were, to fly to the infinite creator of the world in his diſtreſſes, with earneſtneſs, and with ſome degree of faith, and would conſider him as his father and protector.

Sixthly, Whenever we come to examine any particular law, fact, circumſtance, &c. in the natural or moral world, where we have a competent information and knowledge, we find that every thing which has been, was right in reſpect of the ſum total of happineſs; and that when we ſuppoſe any change to have been made, which appears, at firſt ſight, likely to produce more happineſs; yet, after ſome reflection, the conſideration of ſome other things neceſſarily influenced by ſuch a change, convinces us, that the preſent real conſtitution of things is beſt upon the whole. Books of natural hiſtory and natural philoſophy, and indeed daily obſervation, furniſh abundant inſtances of this; ſo as to ſhew, that, other things remaining the ſame, every ſingle thing is the moſt conducive to general happineſs, that it can be according to the beſt of our judgments. And though our judgments are ſo ſhort and imperfect, that this cannot paſs for an abſolutely concluſive evidence, yet it is very remarkable, that theſe imperfect judgments of ours ſhould lie conſtantly on the ſame ſide. We have no reaſon to ſuppoſe, that a better acquaintance with things would give us cauſe to alter it, but far otherwiſe, as appears from the univerſal conſent of all that are inquiſitive and learned in theſe matters. And if there were a few objections in the other ſcale (which I believe philoſophers will ſcarce allow), they can, at the utmoſt, have no more than the ſame imperfect judgment to reſt upon.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, Suppoſing that every ſingle thing is, other things remaining the ſame, the moſt conducive to happineſs that it can be, then the real deficiencies that are found in reſpect of happineſs, and which, at firſt ſight, appear to ariſe from a proportional deficiency in the divine benevolence, may be equally aſcribed to a deficiency in the divine power or knowledge. For this wonderful, preciſe, minute adaptation of every thing to each other is ſuch an argument for benevolence in the moſt unbounded ſenſe, that one would rather aſcribe, whatever diſorders there are in the univerſe, to ſome neceſſary imperfection in things themſelves, ſurpaſſing, if poſſible, the divine power or knowledge to rectify; this appearing to be the weaker ſide of the dilemma.

By a ſingle thing in the two foregoing paragraphs, I mean one that is ſo comparatively; ſo that I call not only a ſingle part of an animal (which yet is a thing decompounded, perhaps without limits), but a whole ſyſtem of animals, when compared with other ſyſtems, a ſingle thing. Now, to aſk whether happineſs could not be promoted, if the whole univerſe was changed, is abſurd; ſince it is probable, from what is already offered, that the happineſs of the univerſe is always infinitely great; the infinity of the divinine power and knowledge requiring infinite benevolence, *i. e.* the infinite happineſs of the creation, if benevolence be at all ſuppoſed a divine attribute, as has been noted before.

Eighthly, Since the apparent defects that are in happineſs may, according to the laſt paragraph but one, be equally referred to ſome ſuppoſed defect in one of the principal attributes of power, knowledge, or goodneſs, it does even from hence appear probable, that theſe defects are not owing to any defect in any of them, *i. e.* that there are no ſuch defects in reality, but that all our difficulties and perplexities in theſe matters ariſe from ſome miſapprehenſion of

our own, in things that infinitely ſurpaſs our capacities; this ſuppoſition, whatever reluctance we may have to it, being far the moſt eaſy and conſiſtent of any.

Ninthly, I remarked above, that the excluſion of infinite malevolence from the divine nature, does itſelf prove the infinite benevolence of God. Let us ſee what arguments there are for this excluſion. Now, malevolence always appears to us under the idea of imperfection and miſery; and therefore infinite malevolence muſt appear to us to be infinitely inconſiſtent with the infinite power and knowledge proved, in the foregoing propoſition, to belong to the divine nature. For the ſame reaſons, infinite benevolence which always appears to us under the idea of perfection and happineſs, ſeems to be the immediate and neceſſary conſequence of the natural attributes of infinite power and knowledge: ſince the wiſhing good to others, and the endeavouring to procure it for them, is, in us, generally attended with a pleaſurable ſtate of mind, we cannot but apply this obſervation to the divine nature, in the ſame manner that we do thoſe made upon our own power and knowledge. And to deny us the liberty of doing this in the firſt caſe, would be to take it away in the laſt, and conſequently to reduce us to the abſurd and impoſſible ſuppoſition, that there is no power or knowledge in the univerſe ſuperior to our own.

Tenthly, Malevolence may alſo be excluded in the following manner: If we ſuppoſe a ſyſtem of beings to be placed in ſuch a ſituation, as that they may occaſion either much happineſs, or much miſery, to each other, it will follow, that the ſcale will turn more and more perpetually in favour of the production of happineſs; for the happineſs which *A* receives from *B*, will lead him by aſſociation to love *B*, and to wiſh and endeavour *B*'s happineſs, in return: *B* will therefore have a motive, ariſing from his deſire

deſire of his own happineſs, to continue his good offices to *A*: whereas the miſery that *A* receives from *B*, will lead him to hate *B*, and to deter him from farther injuries. This muſt neceſſarily be the caſe, if we only admit, that every intelligent being is actuated by the view of private happineſs, and that his memory and trains of ideas are of the ſame kind with ours. Now, the firſt ſuppoſition cannot be doubted, and to exclude the laſt would be to forbid all reaſoning upon other intelligent beings: not to mention, that theſe two ſuppoſitions cannot, perhaps, be ſeparated, ſince the deſire of happineſs ſeems in us to be the mere reſult of aſſociation, as above explained; and aſſociation itſelf the general law, according to which the intellectual world is framed and conducted. Now this different tendency of benevolence and malevolence, viz. of the firſt to augment itſelf without limits, of the latter to deſtroy itſelf ultimately, appears to be a very ſtrong argument for the infinite benevolence of God. For, according to this, benevolence muſt ariſe in all beings, other things being alike, in proportion to their experience of good and evil, and to their knowledge of cauſes and effects. One cannot doubt, therefore, but that infinite benevolence is inſeparably connected with the ſupreme intelligence: all the higher orders of intellectual beings have, probably, higher degrees of it, in the general, and accidental differences, as we call them, being allowed for; and therefore the higheſt intelligence, the infinite mind, muſt have it in an infinite degree; and as every degree of benevolence becomes a proportional ſource of happineſs to the benevolent, ſo the infinite benevolence of the ſupreme Being is the ſame thing with his infinite perfection and happineſs. In like manner, the contemplation of the infinite perfection and happineſs of God is an inexhauſtible treaſure of happineſs to all his benevolent and devout creatures; and he is infinitely benevolent to them,

in giving them ſuch faculties, as by their natural workings, make them take pleaſure in this contemplation of his infinite happineſs.

Eleventhly, A reaſon may be given not only conſiſtent with the infinite benevolence of God, but even ariſing from it, why ſome doubts and perplexities ſhould always attend our inquiries into it, and arguments for it, provided only that we ſuppoſe our preſent frame to remain ſuch as it is; for it appears from the frame of our natures, as I ſhall ſhew hereafter, and was hinted in the laſt paragraph, that our ultimate happineſs muſt conſiſt in the pure and perfect love of God; and yet, that, admitting the preſent frame of our natures, our love of God can never be made pure and perfect without a previous fear of him. In like manner, we do, and muſt, upon our entrance into this world, begin with the idolatry of external things, and, as we advance in it, proceed to the idolatry of ourſelves; which yet are inſuperable bars to a complete happineſs in the love of God. Now, our doubts concerning the divine benevolence teach us to ſet a much higher value upon it, when we have found it, or begin to hope that we have; our fears enhance our hopes, and naſcent love; and altogether mortify our love for the world, and our intereſted concern for ourſelves, and particularly that part of it which ſeeks a complete demonſtration of the divine benevolence, and its infinity, from a mere ſelfiſh motive; till at laſt we arrive at an entire annihilation of ourſelves, and an abſolute acquieſcence and complacence in the will of God, which afford the only full anſwer to all our doubts, and the only radical cure for all our evils and perplexities.

Twelfthly, It is probable, that many good reaſons might be given, why the frame of our natures ſhould be as it is at preſent, all conſiſtent with, or even flowing from, the benevolence of the divine nature; and yet

yet ſtill that ſome ſuppoſition muſt be made, in which the ſame difficulty would again recur, only in a leſs degree. However, if we ſuppoſe this to be the caſe, the difficulty of reconciling evil with the goodneſs of God might be diminiſhed without limits, in the ſame manner as mathematical quantities are exhauſted by the terms of an infinite ſeries. It agrees with this, that as long as any evil remains, this difficulty, which is one ſpecies of evil, muſt remain in a proportional degree; for it would be inconſiſtent to ſuppoſe any one ſpecies to vaniſh before the reſt. However, if God be infinitely benevolent, they muſt all decreaſe without limits, and conſequently this difficulty, as juſt now remarked. In the mean time, we muſt not extend this ſuppoſition of evil, and of the difficulty of accounting for it, to the whole creation: we are no judges of ſuch matters; and the ſcriptures may, perhaps, be thought rather to intimate, that the mixture of good and evil is peculiar to us, than common to the univerſe, in the account which they give of the ſin of our firſt parents, in eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Thirteenthly, Some light may, perhaps be caſt upon this moſt difficult ſubject of the origin of evil, if we lay down the ſeveral notions of infinite goodneſs, which offer themſelves to the mind, and compare them with one another, and with the appearances of things. Let us ſuppoſe then, that we may call that infinite benevolence, which makes either.

1. Each individual infinitely happy always. Or,

2. Each individual always finitely happy, without any mixture of miſery, and infinitely ſo in its progreſs through infinite time. Or,

3. Each individual infinitely happy, upon the balance, in its progreſs through infinite time, but with a mixture of miſery. Or,

4. Each individual finitely happy in the courſe of its exiſtence, whatever that be, but with a mixture

of miſery as before; and the univerſe infinitely happy upon the balance. Or,

5. Some individuals happy and ſome miſerable upon the balance, finitely or infinitely, and yet ſo that there ſhall be an infinite overplus of happineſs in the univerſe.

All poſſible notions of infinite benevolence may, I think, be reduced to ſome one of theſe five; and there are ſome perſons who think, that the infinity of the divine benevolence may be vindicated upon the laſt and loweſt of theſe ſuppoſitions. Let us conſider each particularly.

The firſt, viz. That each individual ſhould be always happy infinitely, is not only contrary to the fact at firſt view, but alſo ſeems impoſſible, as being inconſiſtent with the finite nature of the creatures. We reject it therefore as ſoon as propoſed, and do not expect, that the divine benevolence ſhould be proved infinite in this ſenſe. And yet were each individual always finitely happy according to the next ſuppoſition, we ſhould always be inclined to aſk why he had not a greater finite degree of happineſs conferred upon him, notwithſtanding the manifeſt abſurdity of ſuch a queſtion, which muſt thus recur again and again for ever.

The ſecond ſuppoſition is that which is moſt natural as a mere ſuppoſition. We think that pure benevolence can give nothing but pure happineſs, and infinite benevolence muſt give infinite happineſs. But it is evidently contrary to the fact, to what we ſee and feel, and therefore we are forced, though with great unwillingneſs, to give up this notion alſo. It may, however, be ſome comfort to us, that if we could keep this, the ſame temper of mind which makes us prefer it to the next, would ſuggeſt the queſtion, *Why not more happineſs?* again and again for ever, as juſt now remarked; ſo that we ſhould not be ſatisfied with it, unleſs our tempers were alſo altered. This, indeed,

indeed, would be the caſe, becauſe, as I obſerved before, all the ſpecieſes of evil and imperfection muſt vaniſh together. But then this conſideration, by ſhewing that the endleſs recurrency of the queſtion above-mentioned, and the concomitant diſſatisfaction, are imperfections in us, ſhews at the ſame time, that they are no proper foundation for an objection to the divine benevolence.

The third ſuppoſition is poſſible in itſelf; but then it can neither be ſupported, nor contradicted, by the facts. If there appear an unlimited tendency towards the prevalence of happineſs over miſery, this may be ſome preſumption for it. But all our judgments, and even conjectures, are confined within a ſhort diſtance from the preſent moment. A divine revelation might give us an aſſurance of it. And it ſeems, that this ſuppoſition is, upon an impartial view, equally eligible and ſatisfactory with the foregoing. We eſtimate every quantity by the balance, by what remains after a ſubtraction of its oppoſite; and if this be an allowed authentic method, in the ſeveral kinds of happineſs, why not in happineſs conſidered in the abſtract? But we muſt not conclude that this is the genuine notion of the divine benevolence. There may perhaps be ſome preſumptions for it, both from reaſon and ſcripture; but I think none, in the preſent infancy of knowledge, ſufficient to ground an opinion upon. However, there ſeem to be no poſſible preſumptions againſt it; and this may encourage us to ſearch both the book of God's word, and that of his works, for matter of comfort to ourſelves, and arguments whereby to repreſent his moral character in the moſt amiable light.

The fourth ſuppoſition is one to which many thinking, ſerious, benevolent, and pious perſons are now much inclined. All the arguments here uſed for the divine benevolence, and its infinity, ſeem to infer it, or, if they favour any of the other ſuppoſitions,

ſitions, to favour the third, which may be ſaid to include this fourth. There are alſo many declarations in the ſcriptures concerning the goodneſs, bounty, and mercy of God to all his creatures, which can ſcarce be interpreted in a lower ſenſe.

As to the fifth ſuppoſition, therefore, it follows, that it is oppoſed by the preceding arguments, *i. e.* by the marks and footſteps of God's goodneſs in the creation, and by the declarations of the ſcriptures to the ſame purpoſe. However, there are a few paſſages of ſcripture, from whence ſome very learned and devout men ſtill continue to draw this fifth ſuppoſition; they do alſo endeavour to make this ſuppoſition conſiſtent with the divine benevolence, by making a farther ſuppoſition, viz. that of philoſophical liberty, as it is called in theſe obſervations, or the power of doing different things, the previous circumſtances remaining the ſame. And it is highly incumbent upon us to be humble and diffident in the judgments which we make upon matters of ſuch importance to us, and ſo much above our capacities. However, it does not appear to many other learned and devout perſons, either that the ſcripture paſſages alluded to are a proper foundation for this opinion, or that of philoſophical free-will, though allowed, can afford a ſufficient vindication of the divine attributes.

Theſe obſervations ſeem naturally to occur, upon conſidering theſe five ſuppoſitions, and comparing them with one another, and with the word and works of God. But there is alſo another way of conſidering the third ſuppoſition, which, as it is a preſumption for it, though not an evidence, agreeably to what was intimated above, I ſhall here offer to the reader.

Firſt then, Aſſociation has an evident tendency to convert a ſtate of ſuperior happineſs, mixed with inferior miſery, into one of pure happineſs, into a paradiſiacal one, as has been ſhewn in the firſt part of

theſe

theſe obſervations, *Prop.* 14. *Cor.* 9. Or, in other words, aſſociation tends to convert the ſtate of the third ſuppoſition into that of the ſecond.

Secondly, When any ſmall pain is introductory to a great pleaſure, it is very common for us, without any expreſs reflection on the power of aſſociation, to conſider this pain as coaleſcing with the ſubſequent pleaſure, into a pure pleaſure, equal to the difference between them; and, in ſome caſes, the ſmall pain itſelf puts on the nature of a pleaſure, of which we ſee many inſtances in the daily occurrences of life, where labour, wants, pains, become actually pleaſant to us, by a luſtre borrowed from the pleaſures to be obtained by them. And this happens moſt particularly, when we recollect the events of our paſt lives, or view thoſe of others. It is to be obſerved alſo, that this power of uniting different and oppoſite ſenſations into one increaſes as we advance in life, and in our intellectual capacities; and that, ſtrictly ſpeaking, no ſenſation can be a monad, inaſmuch as the moſt ſimple are infinitely diviſible in reſpect of time and extent of impreſſion. Thoſe, therefore, which are eſteemed the pureſt pleaſures, may contain ſome parts which afford pain; and, converſely, were our capacities ſufficiently enlarged, any ſenſations connected to each other in the way of cauſe and effect, would be eſteemed one ſenſation, and be denominated a pure pleaſure, if pleaſure prevailed upon the whole.

Thirdly, As the enlargement of our capacities enables us thus to take off the edge of our pains, by uniting them with the ſubſequent ſuperior pleaſures, ſo it confers upon us more and more the power of enjoying our future pleaſures by anticipation, by extending the limits of the preſent time, *i. e.* of that time in which we have an intereſt. For the preſent time, in a metaphyſical ſenſe, is an indiviſible moment; but the preſent time, in a practical ſenſe, is a finite

finite quantity of various magnitudes, according to our capacities, and, beginning from an indiviſible moment in all, ſeems to grow on indefinitely in beings who are ever progreſſive in their paſſage through an eternal life.

Suppoſe now a being of great benevolence, and enlarged intellectual capacities, to look down upon mankind paſſing through a mixture of pleaſures and pains, in which, however, there is a balance of pleaſure, to a greater balance of pleaſure perpetually, and, at laſt, to a ſtate of pure and exalted pleaſure made ſo by aſſociation: it is evident, that his benevolence to man will be the ſource of pure pleaſure to him from his power of uniting the oppoſite ſenſations, and of great preſent pleaſure from his power of anticipation. And the more we ſuppoſe the benevolence and capacities of this being enlarged, the greater and more pure will his ſympathetic pleaſure be, which ariſes from the contemplation of man. It follows therefore, that, in the eye of an infinite mind, creatures conducted, as we think, according to the third of the foregoing ſuppoſitions, are conducted according to the ſecond, and theſe according to the firſt; or, in other words, that the firſt, ſecond, and third, of the foregoing ſuppoſitions, are all one and the ſame in the eye of God. For all time, whether paſt, preſent, or future, is preſent time in the eye of God, and all ideas coaleſce into one to him; and this one is infinite happineſs, without any mixture of miſery, viz. by the infinite prepollence of happineſs above miſery, ſo as to annihilate it; and this merely by conſidering time as it ought to be conſidered in ſtrictneſs, *i. e.* as a relative thing, belonging to beings of finite capacities, and varying with them, but which is infinitely abſorbed in the pure eternity of God. Now the appearance of things to the eye of an infinite being muſt be called their real appearance in all propriety. And though it be impoſſible

poſſible for us to arrive as this true way of conceiving things perfectly, or directly, yet we ſhall approach nearer and nearer to it, as our intellectual capacities, benevolence, devotion, and the purity of our happineſs, depending thereon, advance: and we ſeem able, at preſent, to expreſs the real appearance, in the ſame way as mathematicians do ultimate ratios, to which quantities ever tend, and never arrive, and in a language which bears a ſufficient analogy to other expreſſions that are admitted. So that now (if we allow the third ſuppoſition) we may in ſome ſort venture to maintain that, which at firſt ſight ſeemed not only contrary to obvious experience, but even impoſſible, viz that all individuals are actually and always infinitely happy. And thus all difficulties relating to the divine attributes will be taken away; God will be infinitely powerful, knowing, and good, in the moſt abſolute ſenſe, if we conſider things as they appear to him. And ſurely, in all vindications of the divine attributes, this ought to be the light in which we are to conſider things. We ought to ſuppoſe ourſelves in the centre of the ſyſtem, and to try, as far as we are able, to reduce all apparent retrogradations to real progreſſions. It is alſo the greateſt ſatisfaction to the mind thus to approximate to its firſt conceptions concerning the divine goodneſs, and to anſwer that endleſs queſtion, *Why not leſs miſery, and more happineſs?* in a language which is plainly analogous to all other authentic language, though it cannot yet be felt by us on account of our preſent imperfection, and of the mixture of our good with evil. Farther, it is remarkable, that neither the fourth nor fifth ſuppoſitions can paſs into the third, and that the fifth will always have a mixture of miſery in it, as long as the *principium individuationis* is kept up. And if this be taken away, the ſuppoſitions themſelves are deſtroyed, and we entirely loſt.

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I have been the longer in conſidering the divine benevolence, on account of its importance both to our duty and happineſs. There ſeems to be abundant foundation for faith, hope, reſignation, gratitude, love. We cannot doubt but the judge and father of all the world will conduct himſelf according to juſtice, mercy, and goodneſs. However, I deſire to repeat once more, that we do not ſeem to have ſufficient evidence to determine abſolutely for any of the three laſt ſuppoſitions. We cannot indeed but wiſh for the third, both from ſelf-intereſt and benevolence; and its coincidence with the firſt and ſecond, in the manner juſt now explained, appears to be ſome preſumption in favour of it.

PROP. V.

There is but one Being infinite in Power, Knowledge, and Goodneſs; i. e. *but one God.*

For, if we ſuppoſe more than one, it is plain, ſince the attributes of infinite power, knowledge, and goodneſs, include all poſſible perfection, that they muſt be entirely alike to each other, without the leaſt poſſible variation. They will therefore entirely coaleſce in our idea, *i. e.* be one to us. Since they fill all time and ſpace, and are all independent, omnipotent, omniſcient, and infinitely benevolent, their ideas cannot be ſeparated, but will have a numerical, as well as a generical, identity. When we ſuppoſe other beings generically the ſame, and yet numerically different, we do at the ſame time ſuppoſe, that they exiſt in different portions of time or ſpace; which circumſtances cannot have place in reſpect of the ſuppoſed plurality of infinite beings. We conclude, therefore, that there is but one infinite being, or God.

The unity of the godhead is alſo proved by revelation, conſidered as ſupported by evidences which have

have no dependence on natural religion. And as this proof of the unity is of great importance even now, ſo it was of far greater in ancient times, when the world was over-run with polytheiſm. And it is highly probable to me, that as the firſt notions of the divine power, knowledge, and goodneſs, which mankind had, where derived from revelation, ſo much more were their notions of the unity of the Godhead.

PROP. VI.

God is a Spiritual, or immaterial Being.

SINCE God is the cauſe of all things, as appears from the foregoing propoſitions, he muſt be the cauſe of all the motions in the material world. If therefore God be not an immaterial being, then matter may be the cauſe of all the motions in the material world. But matter is a mere paſſive thing, of whoſe very eſſence it is, to be endued with a *vis inertiæ*; for this *vis inertiæ* preſents itſelf immediately in all our obſervations and experiments upon it, and is inſeparable from it, even in idea. When we conſider any of the active powers of matter, as they are called, ſuch as gravitation, magnetiſm, electricity, or the attractions and repulſions, which take place in the coheſions and ſeparations of the ſmall particles of natural bodies, and endeavour to reſolve theſe into ſome higher and ſimpler principles, the *vis inertiæ* is always the common baſis upon which we endeavour to erect our ſolutions. For the active party, which is ſuppoſed to generate the gravitation, magnetiſm, &c. in the paſſive one, muſt have a motion, and a *vis inertiæ*, whereby it endeavours to perſiſt in that motion, elſe it could have no power; and, by parity of reaſon, the paſſive party muſt have a *vis inertiæ* alſo, elſe it could neither make reſiſtance to the active party, nor impreſs motion on foreign bodies.

bodies. Let us proceed therefore as far as we pleaſe in a ſeries of ſucceſſive ſolutions, we ſhall always find a *vis inertiæ* inherent in matter, and a motion derived to it from ſome foreign cauſe. If this cauſe be ſuppoſed matter always, we ſhall be carried on to an infinite ſeries of ſolutions, in each of which the ſame preciſe difficulty will recur, without our at all approaching to the removal of it. Whence, according to the mathematical doctrine of ultimate ratios, not even an infinite ſeries, were that poſſible in this caſe, could remove it. We muſt therefore ſtop ſomewhere, and ſuppoſe the requiſite motion to be imparted to the ſubtle matter, by ſomething, which is not matter; *i. e.* ſince God is the ultimate author of all motion, we muſt ſuppoſe him to be immaterial.

The ſame thing may be inferred thus: if there be nothing but matter in the world, then the motions and modifications of matter muſt be the cauſe of intelligence. But even finite intelligences, ſuch as that of man, for inſtance, ſhew ſo much ſkill and deſign in their conſtitution, as alſo to ſhew, that their cauſes, *i. e.* the appropriated motions and modifications of matter, muſt be appointed and conducted by a prior and ſuperior intelligence. The infinite intelligence of God therefore, proved in the third propoſition, ſince it reſults from the motions and modifications of matter, requires another infinite intelligence to direct theſe motions, which is abſurd. God is therefore proved to be immaterial from his infinite intelligence.

It is true, indeed, that our ſenſes convey nothing to us but impreſſions from matter; and, therefore, that we can have no expreſs original ideas of any things, beſides material ones; whence we are led to conclude, that there is nothing but matter in the univerſe. However, this is evidently a prejudice drawn from our ſituation, and an argument taken merely from our ignorance,

ignorance, and the narrowneſs of our faculties. Since therefore, on the other hand, mere matter appears quite unable to account for the ſimpleſt and moſt ordinary phænomena, we muſt either ſuppoſe an immaterial ſubſtance, or elſe ſuppoſe, that matter has ſome powers and properties different and ſuperior to thoſe which appear. But this laſt ſuppoſition is the ſame in effect as the firſt, though, on account of the imperfection of language, it ſeems to be different.

At the ſame time it ought to be obſerved, that if a perſon acknowledges the infinite power, knowledge, and goodneſs of God, the proofs of which are prior to, and quite independent on, that of his immateriality, this perſon acknowledges all that is of practical importance. But then, on the other hand, it is alſo to be obſerved, that the opinion of the materiality of the divine nature has a tendency to leſſen our reverence for it, and, conſequently, to invalidate the proofs of the divine power, knowledge, and goodneſs.

How far the ſcriptures deliver the immateriality of God in a ſtrict philoſophical ſenſe, may perhaps be doubted, as their ſtyle is in general popular. However, there is a ſtrong preſumption, that they teach this doctrine, ſince the popular ſenſe and natural interpretation of many ſublime paſſages concerning the divine nature infer its immateriality. There is therefore ſome evidence for this attribute, to be taken from revelation, conſidered as ſtanding upon its own diſtinct proofs.

Corollary. Since God is immaterial, matter muſt be one of the works of his infinite power. In the mean time, this does not ſeem to me to exclude the poſſibility of its having exiſted from all eternity. But then, neither have we, on the other hand, any reaſon to conclude, that the whole material ſyſtem, or any part of it, could not have been created in time. It is, perhaps, moſt probable, *i. e.* ſuitable to the

divine attributes, that infinite material worlds have exiſted from all eternity. But it becomes us, in all theſe things, to diſtruſt our own reaſonings and conjectures to the utmoſt.

PROP. VII.

God is an eternal and omnipreſent Being.

God's eternity, *à parte ante*, appears from the ſecond propoſition in which his independency is proved; and the eternity, *à parte poſt*, is inſeparably connected with that *à parte ante*. Both are alſo included in the idea of infinite power, or of infinite knowledge; and, indeed, when we ſay, that God is eternal *à parte ante*, and *à parte poſt*, we do, we can, mean no more, than to ſay, that his power and knowledge extend to all times. For we muſt not conceive, or affirm, that he exiſts in ſucceſſion, as finite beings do; through whoſe imaginations, or intellects, trains of ideas paſs. All time, as was ſaid before, is equally preſent to him, though in a manner of which we cannot form the leaſt conception.

In like manner, by God's omnipreſence, or ubiquity, we muſt be underſtood to mean, that his power and knowledge extend to all places. For as time, and its exponent, the ſucceſſion of ideas, is a thing that relates merely to finite beings; ſo ſpace and place relate, in their original ſenſe, to material ones only; nor can we perceive any relation that they bear to immaterial ones, unleſs as far as we feign a reſemblance between material and immaterial beings, which is ſurely an inconſiſtent fiction. We cannot, therefore, diſcover any relation which ſpace or place bear to the divine exiſtence. It is a ſufficient acknowledgment both of God's eternity and omnipreſence, that we believe his power and knowledge to extend to all times and places, though we be entirely at a loſs how to conceive or expreſs the manner of this

this infinite extent of theſe attributes. And there is a remarkable agreement between innumerable paſſages of the ſcriptures, and this practical notion of God's eternity and omnipreſence.

PROP. VIII.

God is an immutable Being.

This follows from the infinity of the divine power, knowledge, and goodneſs, *i. e.* from his infinite perfection. For if the divine nature admitted of any variation, it would alſo admit of different kinds and degrees of perfection, and therefore could not always be infinitely perfect. This is the moſt abſtracted and philoſophical way of conſidering the divine immutability. In a popular and practical ſenſe, it excludes all that which we call inconſtant, arbitrary, and capricious, in finite beings; and becomes a ſure foundation for hope, truſt, and reſignation. We may conſider ourſelves as being at all times, and in all places, equally under the direction and protection of the ſame infinite power, knowledge, and goodneſs, which are ſo conſpicuous in the frame of the viſible world.

PROP. IX.

God is a free Being.

The authors who have treated upon the divine nature and attributes, uſually aſcribe liberty or freedom to God, and ſuppoſe it to be of a nature analogous to that free-will which they aſcribe to man. But it appears to me, that neither the philoſophical, nor popular liberty, as they are defined below in the fourteenth and fifteenth propoſitions, can be at all applied to God. Thus, we can neither apply to God the power of doing different things, the

previous circumſtances remaining the ſame, nor a voluntary generated power of introducing ideas, or performing motions; nor any thing analogous to either of theſe powers, without the groſſeſt anthropomorphitiſm.

But liberty is alſo uſed in another ſenſe, viz. as the negation of, and the freedom from, a ſuperior, compelling force; and in this ſenſe it may and muſt be applied to the Deity; his independency and infinity including it. And in this ſenſe it is contrary to the notion of thoſe heathens, who ſuppoſed even God himſelf ſubject to fate.

Upon the whole, if by liberty, freedom, or free-will, be meant any thing great or glorious, God certainly has it; if otherwiſe certainly not. Thus, if it mean freedom from a ſuperior compelling cauſe of any kind, as in the laſt paragraph, God certainly has it, he being the cauſe of cauſes, the univerſal, the one only cauſe. If it mean, that God could have made an univerſe leſs perfect than that which actually exiſts, he certainly has it not, becauſe this would make God leſs perfect alſo. And here it ſeems to be a thing eſtabliſhed amongſt writers on this matter, to maintain, that God is ſubject to a moral neceſſity, and to the perfection of his own nature; which expreſſions, however, are to be conſidered as nothing more than particular ways of aſſerting the infinity of the divine power, knowledge, and goodneſs. If it be ſaid, that God might have made a different univerſe, equally perfect with that which now exiſts, and that his freedom conſiſts in this, the anſwer ſeems to be, that we are entirely loſt here, in the infinities of infinities, &c. *ad infinitum*, which always have exiſted, and always will exiſt, with reſpect to kind, degree, and every poſſible mode of exiſtence. One cannot, in the leaſt, preſume either to deny or affirm this kind of freedom of God, ſince the abſolute perfection of God ſeems to imply both entire uniformity,

and

and infinite variety in his works. We can here only ſubmit, and refer all to God's infinite knowledge and perfection.

PROP. X.

Holineſs, Juſtice, Veracity, Mercy, and all other moral Perfections, ought to be aſcribed to God in an infinite Degree.

I HAVE in the laſt four propoſitions treated of ſuch attributes of the divine nature, as have a more immediate connection with the natural ones of independency, infinite power, and infinite knowledge. I come now to thoſe, that are deducible from, and explanatory of the moral one, viz. of the divine benevolence.

The chief of theſe ſeem to be holineſs, juſtice, veracity, and mercy. Theſe are aſcribed to all earthly ſuperiors, to whom we pay reſpect and love, and therefore muſt belong, in the popular and practical ſenſe, to him, who is the higheſt object of reverence and affection. Let us ſee how each is to be defined, and what relation they bear to benevolence.

Firſt, then, Holineſs may be defined by moral purity and rectitude. And theſe, when applied to the Deity, can only denote the rectitude of his actions towards his creatures. If therefore he be benevolent to all his creatures, he cannot but have moral purity and rectitude.

The ſame thing may be conſidered thus: all moral turpitude in us proceeds from our ſelfiſh fears or deſires, made more irregular and impetuous through our ignorance, and other natural imperfections. But none of theſe cauſes can take place with reſpect to the Deity; he muſt therefore be free from all moral turpitude.

Juſtice is that which gives to every one according to his deſerts, at leaſt as much as his good deſerts

require, and not more than is ſuitable to his evil ones. But this is evidently included in the divine benevolence, even according to the fifth of the ſuppoſitions, mentioned *Prop.* 4. by thoſe who defend that ſuppoſition, and, according to the third and fourth, by the common conſent of all, and the plain reaſon of the thing. No man can deſerve more from his Creator than a balance of happineſs proportional to his merit, which is the fourth ſuppoſition; and conſequently the divine benevolence, according to the third ſuppoſition, in which the balance of happineſs is infinite, includes ſtrict juſtice, and infinitely more. And all this will hold equally, whether we define deſert in the popular, practical way, by the three meritorious principles of action, benevolence, piety, and the moral ſenſe, alone; or by theſe, with the additional ſuppoſition of philoſophical liberty, if we embrace either the third or fourth ſuppoſitions. Philoſophical liberty is indeed neceſſary for the vindication of the divine benevolence and juſtice, according to the fifth ſuppoſition, in the opinion of moſt of thoſe who hold this ſuppoſition. But then they eſteem it to be alſo ſufficient for this purpoſe, and conſequently maintain the divine juſtice, into which we are now inquiring.

It may alſo be reckoned a part of juſtice not to let offenders go unpuniſhed, or eſcape with too ſlight a degree of puniſhment; the order and happineſs of the world, *i. e.* benevolence, requiring, that frail men ſhould be deterred from vice by the dreadful examples of others, and miſchievous perſons diſarmed. However, this does not at all hinder, but that the ſame perſons, who are thus puniſhed and diſarmed, may afterwards receive a balance of happineſs, finite or infinite. And thus punitive juſtice may be reconciled to bounty and benevolence, according to the third or fourth ſuppoſitions.

Veracity

Veracity in men is, the obſervance of truth, and fidelity in all their declarations and promiſes to others; and the obligation to it ariſes from its great uſefulneſs in all the intercourſes of mankind with each other, and the extreme miſchiefs which fiction and fraud occaſion in the world. And it cannot be doubted, but that the divine benevolence, according to any of the ſuppoſitions above made, includes what is analogous to this moral quality in men.

In like manner, it cannot be doubted but that the divine benevolence includes mercy, or all that tenderneſs to offenders which the order and happineſs of the world will permit. Or, if the fifth ſuppoſition made concerning the divine benevolence be found to exclude it, this will be a ſtrong argument for rejecting that ſuppoſition.

I have here ſhewn in what manner we may vindicate theſe attributes of the divine nature, from the whole of things, *i. e.* the courſe of events, both as they now appear in the preſent ſtate, and as we expect they will appear in a future one. But God has alſo given us ſufficient general evidences of theſe his relative moral attributes, from the preſent ſtate alone; at the ſame time that, if we extend our views no farther, ſome difficulties and perplexities will ariſe in reſpect of certain particulars. I will mention ſome both of the evidences and difficulties in regard to each of theſe four attributes of holineſs, juſtice, veracity, and mercy.

It might be expected, that God, if he thought fit to inſtitute a religion by revelation, ſhould inſtitute one in which holineſs and moral purity ſhould be eminently enjoined, and moral turpitude prohibited in the moſt awful manner. And it is a remarkable coincidence of things, and evidence of the divine purity, that the Jewiſh and Chriſtian religions ſhould both have this internal proof, and the moſt cogent external ones in their favour. Whilſt on the contrary,

the impure Pagan religions had all the external marks of fiction and forgery.

The voice of conſcience, or the moral ſenſe, within a man, however implanted or generated, enjoining moral rectitude, and forbidding moral turpitude, and accordingly acquitting or condemning, rewarding or puniſhing, bears witneſs, in like manner, to the moral rectitude of that univerſal cauſe from whom it muſt proceed ultimately.

At the ſame time there are difficulties in revealed religion, and deviations in the moral ſenſe, much contrary to what we ſeem to expect from our firſt notions of the divine rectitude.

Since God is juſt, we may expect that virtue will be the ſource of happineſs, vice that of miſery, even in this world. And ſo we find it in general; at the ſame time that there are many particular exceptions of both kinds.

The veracity of God ſeems to engage him to take care, that all thoſe intimations which may be reckoned calls and cautions of nature, ſhould give us right information; alſo that all perſons who have the apparent credentials of being ſent from him, *i. e.* thoſe of performing miracles, ſhould be in truth ſo ſent. And all things concur, in general, to verify both theſe poſitions. There are, however, ſeveral particular exceptions, as is well known.

Mercy requires, that ſuch perſons as repent and amend ſhould have opportunities of freſh trial, and of retrieving, afforded them. And this is remarkably ſo in the general. Moſt men are tried again and again before their healths, fortunes, credit, &c. become irrecoverable. And yet there are ſome inſtances of extraordinary ſeverity upon the very firſt offence.

Now it may be obſerved of all theſe inſtances, that the general tenor is ſufficient to eſtabliſh the attributes here aſſerted; it being reaſonable to expect, from our ignorance of the preſent ſtate, and much more

more from that of the future one, that great difficulties and exceptions muſt occur to us. And as theſe unſearchable judgments of God ſerve to humble us, and make us ſenſible of our ignorance, they even concur with the general tenor.

PROP. XI.

God is to be conſidered by us, not only as our Creator, but alſo as our Governor, Judge, and Father.

THAT God is our Creator, is evident from the three firſt propoſitions; in which his independency and infinite power are eſtabliſhed, from the neceſſity which we finite and dependent beings have of an infinite and independent Creator: and this appellation belongs to him alone.

The three following appellations are firſt applied to earthly ſuperiors; and therefore belong to God only in an analogical ſenſe. It is, however, a ſenſe of infinite importance to be acknowledged and regarded by us: let us therefore, ſee in what manner analogies drawn from language, and from the phænomena of nature, lead us to call God our governor, judge, and father.

As God is our creator, he has, according to the analogy of language, a right to diſpoſe of us, to govern and judge us, and is alſo, our father in a much higher ſenſe than our natural parents, who are only occaſional cauſes, as it were, of our exiſtence. In like manner, his infinite power and knowledge entitle him to be our governor, and his infinite benevolence to be our father: the intimations alſo which he gives of his will, both in his word and works, and the rewards and puniſhments which he beſtows in the way of natural conſequences, as we term it, all ſhew, that he is our governor and judge. And

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as the moral attributes aſſerted in the laſt propoſition may be deduced from theſe appellations of governor, judge, and father, eſtabliſhed on independent principles, ſo they, when proved by their own peculiar evidences, infer theſe appellations: all which may be ſummed up in this general poſition, that the events of life, and the uſe of language, beget ſuch trains of ideas and aſſociations in us, as that we cannot but aſcribe all morally good qualities, and all venerable and amiable appellations, to the Deity; at the ſame time that we perceive the meaning of our expreſſions not to be ſtrictly the ſame, as when they are applied to men; but an analogical meaning, however a higher, more pure, and more perfect one. The juſtneſs of this application is farther confirmed by the common conſent of all ages and nations, and by the whole tenor of the ſcriptures.

If it be ſaid, that ſince this method of ſpeaking is not ſtrictly literal and true, but merely popular and anthropomorphitical, it ought to be rejected; I anſwer, that even the attributes of independency, omnipotence, omniſcience, and infinite benevolence, though the moſt pure, exalted, and philoſophical appellations, to which we can attain, fall infinitely ſhort of the truth, of repreſenting the Deity as he is, but are mere popular and anthropomorphitical expreſſions. And the ſame might ſtill be ſaid for ever of higher and more pure expreſſions, could we arrive at them: they would ever be infinitely deficient, and unworthy of God. But then it appears from the preceding propoſitions, and other writings of a like nature, that, if we will conſider the phænomena of the world, and argue from them ſufficiently, we muſt needs ſee and acknowledge, that there is an infinite being, and that power, knowledge, and goodneſs, are his character. We cannot get rid of this internal feeling and conviction, but by refuſing to conſider the ſubject, and to purſue the train of reaſoning, which

which our own faculties, or the preceding inquiries of others, will lead us to. God is not to be eſteemed an unreal being, or deſtitute of all character, becauſe he is infinite and incomprehenſible, or becauſe we have not adequate phraſes whereby to denote his exiſtence and attributes. On the contrary, his infinite nature ſeems ſtrongly to argue, that exiſtence, power, knowledge, and goodneſs, do really and properly belong to him alone; and that what we call ſo here on earth, in our firſt and literal ſenſes, are mere ſhadows and figures of the true realities. And it would be in vain to bid us reject this language, ſince it muſt recur again and again from the frame of our natures, if we purſue the ſubject. In like manner, the relative moral attributes of holineſs, juſtice, veracity, mercy, &c. and the relative moral appellations of governor, judge, and father, &c. are inſeparably connected with the uſe of language, and the courſe and conſtitution of the viſible world. We ſee that things have happened, and muſt believe, that they will hereafter happen (*i. e.* in the general, and allowing for particular exceptions, as above remarked), after ſuch a manner as theſe attributes and appellations intimate to us: they are, conſequently, a convenient and highly uſeful method of ranging and explaining paſt events, and predicting future ones, and therefore may be uſed for this purpoſe; nay, they muſt be ſo uſed, ſince the events of life thus ranged, explained, and predicted by them, do neceſſarily ſuggeſt them to us, and impreſs upon us this their uſe, admitting only the real exiſtence of God, and his infinite power, knowledge, and goodneſs; which, as was juſt now ſhewn, cannot but be admitted, if men will think ſufficiently on the ſubject. However, ſince the uſe of theſe relative moral attributes and appellations is popular, and attended with particular exceptions; whereas that of the attributes of infinite power, knowledge, and goodneſs, is more philoſophical

philoſophical and extenſive, it will be proper to bear this in mind; and where there appears to be any oppoſition between the popular and philoſophical language, to interpret that in ſubordination to this.

COROLLARY. The doctrine of Providence, general and particular, may be conſidered as a conſequence from the foregoing attributes and appellations of the divine nature. By general providence, I mean the adjuſting all events to the greateſt good of the whole; by particular, the adjuſting all to the greateſt good of each individual; and, conſequently, by both together, the adjuſting the greateſt good of the whole, and of each individual, to each other; ſo that both ſhall fall exactly upon the ſame point. However difficult this may ſeem, I take it to be the genuine conſequence of the foregoing propoſitions. Infinite power, knowledge, and goodneſs, muſt make our moſt kind and merciful Father both able and willing to effect this: it does, therefore, actually take place, though we cannot ſee it. However, that there are many marks both of general and particular providence, as thus explained, is ſufficiently evident and acknowledged by all: both theſe appear alſo to be aſſerted in the ſcriptures.

The following obſervation affords a ſtrong evidence for a particular providence. When a perſon ſurveys the events of his paſt life, he may find many, which have happened much contrary to natural expectation, and his then deſires, which yet appear extremely beneficial and deſirable at the now preſent time, as alſo to have proceeded from natural cauſes then unknown to him. Now, we may conclude from hence, that God conceals the tendencies and reſults of the courſe of nature at the then preſent time, leſt we ſhould truſt in that, and forſake him; but diſcovers them afterwards with their harmonies and uſes, that we may ſee his goodneſs, knowledge, and power, in them, and ſo truſt *him* in

future

future perplexities. It is analogous to this that the ſcripture prophecies are inexplicable before the event, and often ſufficiently clear afterwards.

PROP. XII.

The Manner of Reaſoning here uſed, in reſpect of the Courſe and Conſtitution of Nature, has a Tendency to beget in us Love and Reverence towards God, and Obedience to his Will: or, in other Words, there is a Religion of Nature properly ſo called.

NATURAL religion appears to be uſed in different ſenſes by different writers: however, they are all, I think, reducible to the three that follow, and will all be found to coincide ultimately, though they may appear different at firſt view.

The Firſt Senſe, in which natural religion may be uſed, is that of this propoſition; in which it is put for that love and reverence towards God, and obedience to his will, which the light of nature, or the conſideration of the works of God, enjoins. In this ſenſe it is moſt properly oppoſed to, and contradiſtinguiſhed from, revealed religion, or thoſe affections and actions towards God, which the ſcripture, or the word of God, enjoins.

Secondly, Natural religion may be defined ſuch a regulation of the affections and actions as the moral ſenſe requires: for the moral ſenſe is part of the light of nature, and of our natural faculties, whether it be conſidered as an inſtinct, or as the generated reſult of external impreſſions and our natural frame taken together, according to what is delivered in the firſt part of theſe obſervations; and this moral ſenſe approves and commands, or diſapproves and forbids, certain diſpoſitions of mind, and bodily actions flowing therefrom. It is alſo called the law of firſt

inſcription

inſcription by many perſons, and under that term diſtinguiſhed from the law of revelation, which is ſuppoſed poſterior to it in order of time. Hence the ſame perſons conſider the moral ſenſe, or law of firſt inſcription, as the foundation of natural religion: and, indeed, moſt perſons either expreſsly adopt, or implicitly refer to, this definition of natural religion in their writings and diſcourſes. The heathen world, not having the immediate light of revelation, are ſuppoſed to have had nothing more than the mere light of nature, and mere natural religion; and they ſeem to have been chiefly directed by the ſenſe of what was fit, right, and proper, upon the occaſion, *i. e.* by the moral ſenſe. Natural religion may therefore, according to this way of conſidering it, be properly defined by the moral ſenſe.

Thirdly, Natural religion may be defined by rational ſelf-intereſt, *i. e.* it may be called ſuch a regulation of our affections and actions, as will procure for us our *ſummum bonum*, or greateſt poſſible happineſs. If we ſuppoſe the inquiries of the ancients concerning the *ſummum bonum* to have been of a religious and moral nature, then will this definition be ſuitable to their notions. However, it has a very important uſe, viz. that of compelling us to be attentive, impartial, and earneſt in the inquiry.

I will now proceed, firſt, to prove the propoſition, or to deduce love and reverence to God, and obedience to his will, from the preceding method of reaſoning concerning the courſe and conſtitution of nature; and, ſecondly, to ſhew the perfect agreement of all theſe three definitions of natural religion with each other.

Now it is at once evident, that the conſideration of the infinite power, knowledge, and goodneſs of God, of his holineſs, juſtice, veracity, and mercy, and of his being our creator, governor, judge, and father, muſt inſpire us with the higheſt love and

reverence

reverence for him, and beget in us that tendency to comply with his will, which according to the proper uſe of language, is called a ſenſe of *duty*, *obligation*, of what we *ought* to do. It is evident alſo, that the will of God muſt be determined by his attributes and appellations. He muſt therefore will, that we ſhould apply to him, as we do to earthly ſuperiors of the ſame character, purifying, however, and exalting our affections to the utmoſt; that we ſhould be merciful, holy, juſt, &c. in imitation of him, and becauſe this is to concur with him in his great deſign of making all his creatures happy; and laſtly, that we ſhould ſo uſe the pleaſures of ſenſe, and the enjoyments of this world, as not to hurt ourſelves or others. There is therefore a courſe of action regarding God, our neighbour, and ourſelves, plainly enjoined by the light of nature; or, in the words of the propoſition, there is a religion of nature properly ſo called.

I come, in the next place, to ſhew the agreement of the ſecond and third definitions of natural religion with the firſt, or with that of the propoſition.

Now, that compliance with the moral ſenſe coincides with obedience to the will of God, needs no proof, it being the firſt and immediate dictate of the moral ſenſe, that it is fit, right, and our neceſſary duty, to obey God, as ſoon as he is diſcovered with the amiable and awful attributes and appellations above aſcribed to him. There is, therefore, an entire agreement between the firſt and ſecond definitions. It may appear alſo, that the firſt rule of duty is neceſſary to perfect the ſecond. For the moral ſenſe, as will appear from the preceding hiſtory of its riſe and growth, muſt be vague and uncertain, and vary according to the various circumſtances of life. But the moral character of God, as delivered in the foregoing propoſitions, affords a plain rule of life, applicable

applicable and preciſe in the various circumſtances of it. When, therefore, obedience to the will of God is eſtabliſhed by the moral ſenſe, it does, in return, become a regulator to this, determine its uncertainties, and reconcile its inconſiſtencies. And, agreeably to this, we may obſerve, that the perfection of the moral ſenſe is, in general, proportional to the perfection of our notions of the divine nature; and that the idolatry of the heathens, and their ignorance of the true God, muſt have produced an utter perverſion and corruption of their moral ſenſe, agreeably to the declarations of the ſcriptures; which is a remarkable coincidence of reaſon with revelation.

In like manner, it needs no proof, that rational ſelf-intereſt, and obedience to the will of God, are the ſame thing. Our only hope and ſecurity, here and hereafter, muſt be in our obedience to him, who has all power and all knowledge. And thus the firſt and third definitions are found to be perfectly coincident. The ſecond and third, therefore, *i. e.* the whole three, are coincident alſo.

This coincidence might be confirmed by numberleſs inſtances, were we to conſider and compare together the dictates of the moral character of God, of our own moral ſenſe, properly directed, and of rational ſelf-intereſt in the ſeveral particular circumſtances of life. But this would be to anticipate what I have to ſay in the third chapter of this ſecond part concerning the rule of life.

PROP. XIII.

Natural Religion receives great Light and Confirmation from Revealed.

It ſeems to be the opinion of ſome perſons, that revealed religion is entirely founded upon natural; ſo that unleſs natural religion be firſt eſtabliſhed upon its own proper evidences, we cannot proceed

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at all to the proof of revealed. If this were ſo, revealed religion could not caſt any light or evidence upon natural, but what it had before received from it; and conſequently, this propoſition would be built upon that falſe way of reaſoning which is called arguing in a circle. But there are certainly independent evidences for revealed religion, as well as for natural; they both receive light and confirmation from each other; and this mutual confirmation is a ſtill farther evidence for both. I will give a ſhort account of all theſe particulars, that the propoſition may the more fully appear.

Firſt, Natural religion has independent evidences. This has been the buſineſs of the foregoing propoſitions, and particularly of the laſt, to ſhew. And indeed, it is acknowledged by all, unleſs they be atheiſts or ſceptics. We are certainly able to infer the exiſtence and attributes of God, with our relation and duty to him, from the mere conſideration of natural phænomena, in the ſame manner as we do any concluſions in natural philoſophy. And though our evidence here may not perhaps be demonſtrative, it is certainly probable in the higheſt degree.

Secondly, Revealed religion has alſo independent evidences. For, if we allow the miracles mentioned in the Old and New Teſtaments, the genuineneſs and accompliſhment of the prophecies contained therein, and the moral characters of Chriſt, the prophets and apoſtles, it will be impoſſible not to pay the greateſt regard to the doctrines and precepts which they deliver, *i. e.* to revealed religion. We do, and we muſt always give credit to perſons much ſuperior to ourſelves in natural and moral endowments. Theſe endowments ſtrike us with awe and reverence, engage our attention, humble us, and put us into a teachable, flexible diſpoſition. And I appeal to all thoſe, who do really believe the miracles and moral characters of Chriſt, the prophets and apoſtles, and

the accompliſhment of the prophecies delivered by them, whether they do not immediately find themſelves in this humble, teachable diſpoſition of mind, upon conſidering theſe credentials of a divine miſſion, and that excluſively of all other conſiderations. As to thoſe who do not ſuppoſe Chriſt, the prophets and apoſtles, to have had theſe credentials, they can ſcarce be proper judges, what would be the genuine conſequence of a ſtate of mind, of a belief, which they have not. However, one may appeal even to them, provided they will only ſuppoſe theſe credentials true for a moment, in order to ſee what would then follow. And it is a ſtrong argument of the juſtneſs of this reaſoning, that all thoſe who reject revealed religion, do alſo reject the credentials, *i. e.* the truth of the ſcripture hiſtory. Revealed religion is therefore built upon the truth of the ſcripture hiſtory, *i. e.* upon the external evidences commonly called hiſtorical and prophetical. But theſe evidences are to be tried in the ſame manner as the evidences for any other hiſtory, and have no more connection with natural religion, and its evidences, ſuch, for inſtance, as thoſe delivered in this chapter, than the evidences for the *Greek* or *Roman* hiſtory. So that revealed religion has evidences, and thoſe of the ſtrongeſt kind, entirely independent on natural religion.

Thirdly, Natural religion receives much light and confirmation from revealed, agreeably to the propoſition here to be proved. This follows both becauſe revealed religion, now ſhewn to have its independent evidences, teaches the ſame doctrines concerning God, as I have remarked already in ſeveral places, and delivers the ſame precepts to man, in the general as natural; and becauſe theſe very independent evidences, viz. the miracles and moral characters of Chriſt, the prophets and apoſtles, and the accompliſhment of their prophecies, have a direct

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and immediate tendency to beget in us a deep ſenſe and conviction of a ſuperior power, and of his providence and moral government over the world. So that if a man ſhould either be ignorant of the chain of reaſoning by which the exiſtence and attributes of God and natural religion are proved from the phænomena of the world, or ſhould, from ſome depravation of mind, intellectual or moral, be diſpoſed to call in queſtion this chain of reaſoning, in whole or in part; he muſt however come to the ſame concluſions, from the mere force of the hiſtorical and prophetical evidences in favour of the ſcriptures. And this is a thing of the utmoſt importance to mankind, there being many who are incapable of purſuing this chain of reaſoning, many who, though capable, are diſinclined to it, many who from their vices have a contrary inclination, and ſome who ſeeing the perplexity and obſcurity that attend ſome ſubordinate parts of this reaſoning, are diſpoſed to doubt about the whole. For though ſomething of the ſame kind holds in reſpect of the hiſtorical and prophetical evidences for the truth of the ſcriptures, eſpecially of the laſt, yet, in general, theſe are more level to the capacities of the inferior ranks amongſt mankind, and more ſimple and ſtriking, than the independent evidences for natural religion; and if they were but equally convincing, they would, however, make the evidence double upon the whole. Not to mention, that it is an inexpreſſible ſatisfaction to the beſt men, and the ableſt philoſophers, thoſe who have the moſt entire conviction from natural reaſon, to have this new and diſtinct ſupport for ſuch important truths. It may be added as an argument in favour of the reaſoning of this paragraph, *i. e.* of the propoſition here to be proved, to thoſe who believe revealed religion, that God has thought fit to teach mankind natural religion chiefly by means of revealed.

Fourthly, Revealed religion receives great light and confirmation from natural. For if we ſuppoſe a perſon to be firſt inſtructed in the doctrines and precepts of natural religion, and to be entirely convinced of their truth and fitneſs from the mere light of reaſon, and then to have the ſcriptures communicated to him, the conformity of theſe with his previous notions would be a ſtrong evidence in their favour, *i. e.* in favour of the miracles, prophecies, and thoſe doctrines which are peculiar to revealed religion. When, farther, he came to perceive, that many of the writers of the ſacred books lived when the truths of natural religion were unknown to the reſt of the world, and that many alſo were of ſo low a rank in life, that they cannot be ſuppoſed to have known even ſo much as the reſt of the world did, by natural means, he will be ſtrongly inclined to allow them that ſupernatural light which they claim, *i. e.* to allow their divine authority.

Laſtly, The mutual light and confirmation which natural and revealed religion caſt upon each other, and the analogy which there is between their proper evidences, and even that between the ſeveral obſcurities and perplexities that attend each, are a new argument in favour of both, conſidered as united together, and making one rule of life, and the charter of a happy immortality. For reſemblance, agreement, and harmony of the parts, are the peculiar characteriſtics of truth, as inconſiſtency and ſelf-contradiction are of fiction and falſehood.

PROP.

PROP. XIV.

Religion preſuppoſes Free-will in the popular and practical Senſe, i. e. *it preſuppoſes a voluntary Power over our Affections and Actions.*

For religion being the regulation of our affections and actions according to the will of God, it preſuppoſes, that after this will is made known to us, and we, in conſequence thereof, become deſirous of complying with it, a ſufficient power of complying with it ſhould be put into our hands. Thus, for inſtance, ſince religion commands us to love God and our neighbour, it preſuppoſes that we have the power of generating theſe affections in ourſelves, by introducing the proper generating cauſes, and making the proper aſſociations, *i. e.* by meditation, religious converſation, reading practical books of religion, and prayer. Since religion requires of us to perform beneficent actions, and to abſtain from injurious ones, alſo to abſtain from all thoſe ſelf-indulgences, which would be hurtful to ourſelves, it preſuppoſes, either that we have a power of ſo doing, or at leaſt a power of generating ſuch diſpoſitions of mind, as will enable us ſo to do. Farther, it preſuppoſes that we have a power of making perpetual improvement in virtuous affections and actions, ſince this alſo is required of us by it. Still farther, ſince religion requires of a man this regulation of his affections and actions, and ſince the powers hitherto mentioned are all grounded upon a ſufficient deſire thus to regulate himſelf, it muſt preſuppoſe a power of generating this ſufficient deſire, and ſo on till we come to ſomething which the man is already poſſeſſed of, as part of his mental frame, either conferred in a ſupernatural way, or acquired in the uſual courſe of nature. For religion, in requiring the powers above-mentioned, requires alſo whatever pre-

vious powers are neceſſary to the actual exertion of theſe powers. But all theſe powers, of whatever order they are, the laſt excepted, are thoſe powers over our affections and actions, which I have, in the foregoing part of this work, endeavoured to derive from aſſociation, and ſhewn to be the ſame with thoſe which are commonly called voluntary powers. It follows, therefore, that religion requires voluntary powers over our affections and actions, or free-will in the popular and practical ſenſe.

This may be illuſtrated by the conſideration of the ſtate of madmen, idiots, children, and brutes, in reſpect of religion. For as they are all eſteemed to be incapable of religion, and exempted from the obligation thereof, ſo the reaſon of this in all is evidently, that they are deſtitute of the proper voluntary powers over their affections and actions; the aſſociations requiſite thereto having never been formed in idiots, children, and brutes, and being confounded and deſtroyed in madmen. For ſuppoſe the child to be grown up, and the madman to recover his ſenſes, *i. e.* ſuppoſe the aſſociations requiſite for the voluntary powers to be generated or reſtored, and religion will claim them as its proper ſubjects.

In like manner, it may be obſerved, that when any action is commended or blamed, this is always done upon ſuppoſition, that the action under conſideration was the effect of voluntary powers. Thus, when a man commits an action otherwiſe blameable, through inattention, ignorance, or diſeaſe, he is excuſed on account of its being involuntary; unleſs the inattention, ignorance, or diſeaſe, were themſelves voluntary, and then the blame remains. But commendation and blame are ideas that belong to religion: it appears therefore, that voluntary powers muſt belong to it alſo.

I aſſerted above, that religion not only requires and preſuppoſes the common voluntary powers, by which

which we perform and forbear actions, and new-model our affections, but alſo whatever elſe, voluntary or involuntary, is neceſſary for the actual exertion of theſe powers. And the connection between theſe points ſeems to be immediate and undeniable; to require any thing, muſt be to require all that is neceſſary for that thing. And yet, ſince all men do not act up to the precepts of religion, it ſeems undeniable, on the other hand, that ſome want ſomething that is neceſſary, immediately or mediately, for the actual exertion of the proper voluntary powers over their affections and actions. Now, I ſee no way of extricating ourſelves from this difficulty, but by ſuppoſing, that thoſe who want this one neceſſary thing at preſent, will, however, obtain it hereafter, and that they who ſhall obtain it at any diſtant future time, may be ſaid to have obtained it already, in the eye of him to whom paſt, preſent, and future, are all preſent, *who quickeneth the dead, and calleth the things that be not as though they were.* For that the ſuppoſition of free-will, in the philoſophical ſenſe, cannot ſolve this difficulty, will appear, I think, in the next propoſition.

Corollary. It may be reckoned ſome confirmation of religion, that the voluntary powers which it requires, according to this propoſition, are an evident fact; and alſo that they are deducible from the frame of our natures, *i. e.* from our original faculties, and the law of aſſociation, taken together. For thus religion may be ſaid to harmonize with obſervation, and with the nature of man, its ſubject.

PROP. XV.

Religion does not preſuppoſe Free-will in the philoſophical Senſe, i. e. *it does not preſuppoſe a Power of doing different Things, the previous Circumſtances remaining the ſame.*

For, Firſt, It has been ſhewn, in the foregoing part of this work, that we do not, in fact, ever exert any ſuch power in the important actions of our lives, or the ſtrong workings of our affections, all theſe being evidently determinable by the previous circumſtances. There are therefore no actions or affections left, except trifling and evaneſcent ones, in which religion can preſuppoſe philoſophical free-will, or liberty; and even here the evidence for it is merely an *argumentum ab ignorantiâ.* But if religion requires philoſophical liberty at all, it muſt require it chiefly in the moſt important actions and affections. It does not therefore require it at all. We cannot ſuppoſe religion to be at variance with common obſervation, and the frame of our natures.

Secondly, Some reaſons have been given already, in the firſt part of this work, and more will be added in the next propoſition, to ſhew that philoſophical liberty cannot take place in man, but is an impoſſibility. It is therefore impoſſible, that religion ſhould require it.

Thirdly, It appears from the courſe of reaſoning uſed under the foregoing propoſition, that all which religion does require and preſuppoſe, is, firſt, a ſufficient deſire, hope, fear, ſelf-intereſt, or other ſuch like motive, and then ſufficient voluntary powers, whereby to regulate our affections and actions agreeably to the will of God. But philoſophical liberty, or the power of doing different things, the previous circumſtances remaining the ſame, is ſo far from being

being required, in order to our obtaining any of theſe requiſites, that it is inconſiſtent with them. For the ſufficient deſire, &c. unleſs it be given by God in a ſupernatural way, is of a factitious nature, and follows the previous circumſtances with a rigorous exactneſs; in like manner the voluntary powers are all generated according to the law of aſſociation, which law operates in a mechanical neceſſary way, and admits of no variations, while the circumſtances remain the ſame; all which is, I preſume, ſufficiently evident to thoſe who have well conſidered the foregoing part of this work. Theſe requiſites are therefore inconſiſtent with philoſophical liberty, inaſmuch as this implies, that though there be a deſire ſufficient to cauſe the exertion of the will, this exertion may or may not follow; alſo, that though the voluntary powers depending on this exertion be completely generated by aſſociation, they may or may not follow it in fact. This ſuppoſition is indeed abſurd at firſt ſight; however, if it be admitted for a moment, in order to ſee what would follow, it is manifeſt, that the man will be rendered leſs able to comply with the will of God thereby, and that it will not add to, but take away from, the requiſites propoſed by religion. Philoſophical liberty does not therefore help us to ſolve the difficulty mentioned under the laſt propoſition, but, on the contrary, increaſes it.

If it ſhould be ſaid, that we are not to ſuppoſe the deſire ſufficient, and the voluntary powers complete, and then farther to ſuppoſe, that theſe may or may not take effect, but only to ſuppoſe deſire in general, ſufficient or inſufficient, and voluntary powers in general, complete or incomplete, and that thus it will not be unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that they may or may not take effect; whence the manifeſt abſurdity mentioned in the laſt paragraph will be removed; I anſwer, that this is to deſert the hypotheſis of philoſophical liberty, the previous circumſtances being

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ſuppoſed different, that ſo their conſequences may be different alſo. If any particular degree of deſire or voluntary power be fixed upon, and all the other concurring circumſtances of body and mind fixed likewiſe, *i. e.* if the previous circumſtances be rigorouſly determinate, which is the ſuppoſition of philoſophical liberty, this one fixed, determinate degree of deſire, or voluntary power, cannot have the two oppoſite epithets of ſufficient and inſufficient, or of complete and incomplete, both predicated of it with truth, define ſufficiency or completeneſs as you pleaſe. Philoſophical liberty does not therefore allow us to ſuppoſe deſire or voluntary power in general, in order that they either may or may not take effect.

Fourthly, It will appear that religion does not preſuppoſe philoſophical liberty, if we enter upon the examination of thoſe arguments which are commonly brought to ſhew that it does. Theſe are, that unleſs philoſophical liberty be admitted, there will be no foundation for commendation or blame, and conſequently no difference between virtue and vice; that all puniſhment for actions, uſually called vicious, will be unjuſt; and that God will be the author of ſuch actions, which it is impious to ſuppoſe; inaſmuch as the notion of popular liberty is not ſufficient to obviate theſe difficulties. Now, to this I anſwer, that there are two different methods of ſpeaking, and, as it were, two different languages, uſed upon theſe ſubjects; the one popular, and, when applied to God, anthropomorphitical; the other philoſophical; and that the notion of popular liberty is ſufficient to obviate theſe difficulties, while we keep to the popular language alone; alſo, that the philoſophical language does of itſelf obviate theſe difficulties, while we keep to it alone; but that, if we mix theſe languages, then, and not till then, inſuperable difficulties will ariſe, as might well be expected. Let us conſider each of theſe poſitions particularly.

First

First then, I say that the supposition of popular liberty is sufficient to obviate the forementioned difficulties, whilst we keep to the popular language alone. For, in the popular language, a man is commended and blamed merely for the right or wrong use of his voluntary powers; the first is called virtue, the last vice; and rewards and punishments are said to be respectively due to them. Thus, when a man, having an opportunity to do a beneficent action, exerts an act of will, and, in consequence thereof does it, he is commended for it; it is called a virtue, or a right use of his voluntary powers, and is said to deserve a reward; whereas, had he, in like circumstances, done a malevolent action, he would have been blamed for it; it would have been called a wrong use of his voluntary powers, or a vice; and a punishment inflicted upon him, in consequence hereof, would have been said to be just. This is a mere history of the fact, and a narration of the method in which the words here considered acquire their proper senses; and I appeal to the general tenor of writings and discourses for the support of what is here asserted. If no voluntary action be exerted, the words commendation, right use, virtue, reward, on one hand, also the words, blame, wrong use, vice, punishment, on the other, become entirely unapplicable. If there be, and the motive be good, suppose piety or benevolence, the first set of words take place; if the motive be bad, the last. Men, in the common use of language, never consider whether the agent had it in his power to have done otherwise, the previous circumstances remaining the same; they only require, that he should have done a beneficient action, from a benevolent intention. If they find this, they will apply the words, commendation, right use, &c. And the same holds in respect of injurious actions, and malevolent intentions. The agent will, in this case, be blamed, and said to be justly punished, without any farther inquiry. Sometimes

times, indeed, they do inquire farther, viz. into the original of theſe intentions. But then this comes to the ſame thing at laſt; for if theſe intentions were generated voluntarily, it enhances the commendation or blame due to them; if, in great meaſure, involuntarily, abates it. Popular liberty, or voluntary powers, do therefore afford ſufficient foundation for commendation and blame, for the difference between virtue and vice, and for the juſtice of puniſhing vice according to the popular language. Where it is to be remarked, that whatever will juſtify puniſhments inflicted by men, will juſtify thoſe inflicted by God in like circumſtances, ſince juſtice is aſcribed to God only in a popular and anthropomorphitical ſenſe.

And as popular liberty ſuffices for the foremen-tioned purpoſes, whilſt we uſe the popular language, ſo it vindicates God from the charge of being the author of ſin, according to the ſame language. For, according to this, all voluntary actions are aſcribed to men, not to God; but ſin, or vice, always preſuppoſes an exertion of a voluntary power, according to the popular language; therefore ſin muſt be aſcribed to man, and not to God, as long as we continue to ſpeak the popular language.

Secondly, I ſay, that if we keep to the philoſophical language alone, it will obviate all difficulties, and enable us to talk conſiſtently and clearly upon theſe ſubjects. For, according to this, virtue and vice are to actions, what ſecondary qualities are to natural bodies; *i. e.* only ways of expreſſing the relation which they bear to happineſs and miſery, juſt as the ſecondary qualities of bodies are only modifications of the primary ones. And the ſame may be ſaid of all the other words belonging to the moral ſenſe. Hence it follows, that, according to the philoſophical language, we are to conſider all the moral appellations of actions as only denoting their relation to natural good and evil, and that moral good and evil are only compoſitions and decompoſitions

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of natural. There is, however, a difference between moral good and moral evil, becauſe they are different and oppoſite compoſitions; they may alſo be attended with different and oppoſite compoſitions, from the frame of our natures, and circumſtances of our lives, ſuch as commendation and blame.

And as juſtice in God is, by the ſame language, exalted into benevolence, he may inflict puniſhment, *i. e.* another ſpecies of natural evil, juſtly, provided it be conſiſtent with benevolence, *i. e.* with a balance of happineſs. Man may alſo inflict puniſhment juſtly, provided he does it according to ſome definition of juſtice amongſt men, previouſly ſettled and allowed, ſuppoſe compliance with the will of God, the laws of ſociety, the greater good of the whole, &c.

Farther, ſince all the actions of man proceed ultimately from God, the one univerſal cauſe, we muſt, according to this language, annihilate ſelf, and aſcribe all to God. But then, ſince vice, ſin, &c. are only modifications and compoſitions of natural evil, according to the ſame language, this will only be to aſcribe natural evil to him; and, if the balance of natural good be infinite, then even this natural evil will be abſorbed and annihilated by it.

It may a little illuſtrate what is here delivered, to remark, that as we ſhould not ſay of a ſuperior being, whoſe ſight could penetrate to the ultimate conſtitution of bodies, that he diſtinguiſhed colours, but rather, that he diſtinguiſhed thoſe modifications of matter which produce the appearances of colours in us, ſo we ought not to aſcribe our ſecondary ideas of virtue and vice to ſuperior intelligences, and much leſs to the ſupreme.

Thirdly, I ſay, that if we mix theſe two languages, many difficulties and abſurdities muſt enſue from this previous abſurdity. Thus, if, retaining the popular notions of moral good and evil, we ſuppoſe God,

according

according to the philoſophical language, to be benevolent only, *i. e.* to regard only natural good and evil, or to be the author of all actions, the conſequence will be impious. If we adhere to the philoſophical notions of virtue and vice, we muſt not retain the popular notion of God's juſtice, inaſmuch as puniſhment will then be unjuſt; as it will alſo be, if we join the popular notion of God's juſtice with the philoſophical one, of his being the author of all actions. Laſtly, if we allow man to conſider himſelf as the author of his own actions, he muſt alſo conſider virtue and vice according to the popular notions, and conceive of God as endued with the popular attribute of juſtice, in order to be incited to virtue, and deterred from vice; whereas, could man really annihilate himſelf, and refer all to God, perfect love would caſt out fear, he would immediately become partaker of the divine nature, and, being one with God, would ſee him to be pure benevolence and love, and all that he has made to be good.

The following remark may perhaps contribute to illuſtrate this matter. Virtue and vice, merit and demerit, reward and puniſhment, are applied to voluntary actions only, as before-mentioned. Hence they are eſteemed unapplicable to involuntary ones. But involuntary actions are neceſſary by a neceſſity *ab extra*, which is generally ſeen; and becauſe the neceſſity *ab intra*, which cauſes voluntary actions, is ſeldom ſeen, theſe are ſuppoſed not to be neceſſary. Hence not neceſſary, and neceſſary, are put for voluntary and involuntary, reſpectively; and moral appellations ſuppoſed peculiar to the firſt, *i. e.* not neceſſary; inconſiſtent with the laſt, *i. e.* neceſſary. Hence, when we come to diſcover our miſtake, and to find, that voluntary actions are neceſſary, an inconſiſtency ariſes; we apply moral appellations to them as voluntary from a primary aſſociation, deny theſe appellations of them on account of their new denomination

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of neceſſary, and a ſecondary and tralatitious aſſociation. Here then, if we can either perſiſt in our miſtake, and ſtill ſuppoſe voluntary actions not to be neceſſary; or, finding this miſtake, can however perſiſt to apply moral appellations to ſuch neceſſary actions as are voluntary, from the primary aſſociation; or, laſtly, not being able to withſtand the force of the ſecondary aſſociation, whereby moral appellations are denied of neceſſary actions, voluntary as well as involuntary, can perceive that moral good and evil are only compoſitions of natural, *i. e.* if we can either ſee the whole truth, or ſhut our eyes againſt that part that offends us; no difficulty will ariſe.

Philoſophical liberty is alſo ſuppoſed by ſome neceſſary, in order to ſolve the origin of evil, and to juſtify the eternity of puniſhment; and the obviating of theſe difficulties is brought as an argument in ſupport of it. Now here I obſerve,

Firſt, That the origin of evil may be made conſiſtent with the benevolence of God, by ſuppoſing that every creature has a balance of happineſs; and, conſequently, ſince this is a ſuppoſition highly probable, there ſeems to be little need of philoſophical liberty for this purpoſe.

Secondly, That, ſince this ſuppoſition is highly probable, the eternity of puniſhment is highly improbable; and, conſequently, that philoſophical liberty may be needleſs here alſo.

Thirdly, That philoſophical liberty will not ſolve the origin of evil. The method of reaſoning uſed here is ſome ſuch as this. If man have not philoſophical liberty, but always does the ſame thing, where the previous circumſtances are the ſame, then all his actions are to be referred to God; conſequently, if he have philoſophical liberty, all his actions need not be referred to God; he is an independent creature in ſome things, and is himſelf alone chargeable with ſome of his actions. Let man act wrong in theſe independent

dependent caſes, and the evil which follows will be chargeable upon man, and not God, *i. e.* the origin of evil will be accounted for. But here it is to be obſerved, that there are ſome evils, or ſufferings, which cannot be ſuppoſed to ariſe from the abuſe of free-will in the creature that ſuffers, as in the pains which happen to children juſt born, and to brutes. Theſe evils are not therefore chargeable upon *them.* If, therefore, they be chargeable upon free-will, it muſt be the free-will of ſome other creature. But this is as great a difficulty, as that which it is brought to ſolve; and cannot be ſolved but by ſuppoſing that God gives a balance of happineſs to *A*, for what he ſuffers from *B*. Now this ſuppoſition, in its full extent, will ſolve the firſt difficulty, and make the hypotheſis of free-will entirely unneceſſary, as obſerved above. But, beſides this, it is to be conſidered, that ſince free-will is thus the occaſion of introducing evil into the world, the reſtleſs, ſelfiſh, objecting creature will aſk why he has free-will, ſince it is not this, but happineſs, which *he* deſires, and hoped from the divine benevolence, the attribute now to be vindicated. He that produces any cauſe, does, in effect, produce the thing cauſed. To give a being a power of making itſelf miſerable, if this being uſe that power, is juſt the ſame thing, in him who has infinite power and knowledge, as directly making him miſerable; and appears to be no otherwiſe conſiſtent with benevolence to that being, than upon ſuppoſition, that ſuperior happineſs is conferred upon him afterwards. Now this removes the difficulty in the caſe of neceſſity, as well as of free-will, in the eye of reaſon, of an infinite being; and claſhes leſs and leſs without limits with the imagination, as we advance in intellect, diſintereſtedneſs, and abſolute reſignation to God.

If it be ſaid, that God could not but beſtow free-will upon his creatures, I anſwer, that this is *gratis dictum,*

dictum, there not being the leaſt appearance of evidence for it; alſo, that it is making God ſubject to a neceſſity ſuperior to himſelf, which would be to raiſe a greater difficulty than it ſolves; and, upon the whole, we may conclude, that the ſuppoſition of free-will, or liberty, in the philoſophical ſenſe, does not at all help us to account for the origin of evil.

Fourthly, Since free-will cannot account for finite evil, much leſs can it account for infinite, *i. e.* for the eternity of puniſhment. And indeed many, who receive free-will, do, however, ſee its inſufficiency for this purpoſe, and, in conſequence thereof, believe that the puniſhments of a future ſtate will not be eternal. It is true, indeed, that the arguments againſt the eternity of puniſhment are ſhorter, ſtronger, and clearer, upon the ſuppoſition of neceſſity, of God's being the real, ultimate author of all actions, than upon the ſuppoſition of free-will. But then this ſeems, if all things be duly conſidered, to be rather a preſumption in favour of the doctrine of neceſſity, than otherwiſe.

The invention and application of the hypotheſis of free-will, for the vindication of the divine benevolence, has probably ariſen from the application of what paſſes in human affairs, in too ſtrict a manner, to the relation between the Creator and his creatures, *i. e.* to an anthropomorphitiſm of too groſs a kind. Thus the actions of a ſon are free, in reſpect of his father, *i. e.* though the father can, and does influence the ſon in many things, yet the ſon's actions depend upon many circumſtances, impreſſions, aſſociations, &c. in which the father has no concern. It will therefore be a ſufficient vindication of the father's benevolence to the ſon, if he has taken care, that the ſon ſuffers nothing from the things over which the father has power. What evils happen to the ſon, from quarters where the ſon is free in re-

ſpect of his father, *i. e.* uninfluenced by him, theſe are no ways to be referred to the father. Now, it is very natural for humble and pious men, in conſidering the ſins and miſeries of mankind, to ſuppoſe that we have ſome ſuch powers independent of God; and that all the evil, which happens to each perſon, is to be derived from theſe independent powers. But then this notion ſhould not be haſtily and blindly embraced and maintained, without an examination of the fact, and of the conſiſtency of ſuch a notion with piety, in other reſpects. The firſt of theſe points I have already conſidered in the foregoing part of this work; the laſt I ſhall now conſider in the following propoſition.

PROP. XVI.

The natural Attributes of God, or his infinite Power and Knowledge, exclude the Poſſibility of Free-will in the philoſophical Senſe.

For, to ſuppoſe that man has a power independent of God, is to ſuppoſe, that God's power does not extend to all things, *i. e.* is not infinite. If it be ſaid, that the power itſelf depends upon God, but the exertion of it upon man, the ſame difficulty will recur; ſince the exertion does not depend upon God, there will be ſomething produced in the world, which is not the effect of his power, *i. e.* his power will not extend to all things, conſequently not be infinite. And the ſame thing holds, if we refine farther, and proceed to the exertion of the exertion, &c. If this depend upon man, God's power will be limited by man's; if upon God, we return to the hypotheſis of neceſſity, and of God's being the author of all things. However, the ſimpleſt and cleareſt way is to ſuppoſe, that power, and the exertion of power,

are

are one and the ſame thing; for power is never known but by its actual exertion, *i. e.* is no power till it be exerted. If, indeed, we ſay that man's actions depend both upon God and himſelf, this ſeems at firſt ſight to ſolve the difficulty. Since they depend upon God, his power may be infinite; ſince they depend on man, they may be aſcribed to *him*. But then the thing in man on which they depend, call it what you pleaſe, muſt either depend upon God or not; if it does, neceſſity returns; if not, God's infinite power is infringed. And the ſame thing will hold, as it appears to me, in any other way of ſtating this matter.

Again, to ſuppoſe that a man may do either the action *A*, or its oppoſite *a*, the previous circumſtances remaining the ſame, is to ſuppoſe that one of them may ariſe without a cauſe; for the ſame previous circumſtances cannot be the cauſe of the two oppoſite effects. Now, if any thing can ariſe without a cauſe, all things may, by parity of reaſon; which is contrary to the firſt propoſition of this chapter, or to the common foundation upon which writers have erected their arguments for the being and attributes of God. To ſay that free-will is the cauſe, is an identical propoſition; ſince it is ſaying, that the power of doing different things, the previous circumſtances remaining the ſame, is the cauſe that this may be done, viz, that either *A* or *a* may follow the ſame previous circumſtances. Or, if we put for philoſophical free-will the power of doing things without a cauſe, it will be a word of nearly the ſame import as chance. For chance is the ignorance or denial of a cauſe. It will therefore be as unfit to aſcribe a real caſuality to free-will as to chance.

And as free-will is inconſiſtent with the infinite power of God, ſo it is with his infinite knowledge alſo. For infinite knowledge muſt include the knowledge

of all future things, as well as of all paſt and preſent ones. Beſides, paſt, preſent and future, are all preſent with reſpect to God, as has been obſerved before. Infinite knowledge muſt therefore include preſcience. But free-will does not allow of preſcience. Knowledge of all kinds preſuppoſes the certainty of the thing known, *i. e.* preſuppoſes that it is determined in reſpect of time, place, manner, &c. *i. e.* preſuppoſes it to be neceſſary. Thus, if we conſider any thing as known certainly, or certain ſimply, ſuch as a mathematical truth, a paſt fact, &c. we ſhall find it to be neceſſary, and that it cannot be otherwiſe than it now is, or was formerly; which is the contrary to what is ſuppoſed of the actions of creatures endued with free-will. Theſe actions, therefore, cannot be known, or foreknown, not being the objects of knowledge.

The maintainers of neceſſity do indeed deny, that there is any ſuch thing as uncertainty at all; unleſs as far as this is put relatively for the limitation of knowledge in any being, ſo that the thing called uncertain may or may not be, for any thing that this being knows to the contrary. But if they do, for argument's ſake, allow ſuch a thing as abſolute uncertainty, *i. e.* that a thing either may or may not be, it is plain, that this abſolute uncertainty muſt include the relative, *i. e.* exclude knowledge and foreknowledge. That action of *B* which either may or may not be, cannnot be known certainly to be by *A*, becauſe it may not be; it cannot be known not to be, becauſe it may be. Suppoſe *A* to make conjectures concerning any future action of *B*. Then this action may or may not be, for any thing *A* knows to the contrary; it alſo may or may not be in itſelf, provided there be any ſuch thing as abſolute uncertainty. Suppoſe *A*'s conjectures to paſs into a well-grounded probability of a high degree, that the action will happen,

happen, then both the relative and abſolute *may not*, are reduced to narrow limits. Suppoſe *A's* conjectures to ariſe to knowledge, or certainty, then both the relative and abſolute *may not*, vaniſh. *A* cannot know, or be certain, that a thing will happen, at the ſame time that it may or may not happen for any thing that he knows to the contrary; nor can a thing be relatively certain, and abſolutely uncertain. *A's* foreknowledge does therefore imply relative certainty, this requires abſolute certainty; and abſolute certainty is in expreſs terms oppoſite to philoſophical free-will. Foreknowledge is therefore inconſiſtent with free-will; or rather free-will, if it were poſſible, would exclude foreknowledge. It is not therefore poſſible.

Nor does it alter the caſe here to allege, that God's infinite knowledge muſt extend infinitely farther than man's, and, conſequently, may extend to things uncertain in themſelves, ſince the very terms *knowledge* and *uncertain* are inconſiſtent. To make them conſiſtent, we muſt affix ſome new and different ſenſe to one of them, which would be to give up either the divine foreknowledge or free-will in reality, while we pretend in words to maintain them. If God's knowledge be ſuppoſed to differ ſo much from man's in this ſimple eſſential circumſtance, that the certainty of it does not imply the certainty of the thing known, we loſe all conception of it. And if the ſame liberties were uſed with the divine power and benevolence, we ſhould loſe all conception of the divine nature.

To which it may be added, that the reaſoning in the laſt paragraph but one, concerning the knowledge of the being *A*, is not at all affected, or altered, by his rank, as to intelligence. Suppoſe his intellectual capacities to be greater and greater perpetually, ſtill all things remain preciſely the ſame, without the

leaſt variation. They will therefore, according to the analogy of ultimate ratios, remain preciſely the ſame though his knowledge be ſuppoſed infinite. It follows, therefore, that God's infinite and certain knowledge, or his foreknowledge, is as inconſiſtent with philoſophical free-will, as man's finite, but certain, knowledge or foreknowledge.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of the TRUTH *of the* CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

To believe the chriſtian religion, is to believe that *Moſes* and the prophets, *Chriſt* and his apoſtles, were endued with divine authority, that they had a commiſſion from God to act and teach as they did, and that he will verify their declarations concerning future things, and eſpecially thoſe concerning a future life, by the event; or, in other words, it is to receive the ſcriptures as our rule of life, and the foundation of all our hopes and fears. And as all thoſe who regulate their faith and practice by the ſcriptures are chriſtians; ſo all thoſe who diſclaim that name, and paſs under the general title of unbelievers, do alſo diſavow this regard to the ſcriptures. But there are various claſſes of unbelievers. Some appear to treat the ſcriptures as mere forgeries; others allow them to be the genuine writings of thoſe whoſe names they bear, but ſuppoſe them to abound with fictions, not only in the miraculous, but alſo in the common part of the hiſtory; others, again, allow this part, but reject that; and, laſtly, there are others who ſeem to allow the truth of the principal facts, both common and miraculous, contained in the ſcriptures, and yet ſtill call in queſtion its divine authority, as a rule of life, and an evidence of a happy futurity under Chriſt our ſaviour and king. He, therefore, that would ſatisfy himſelf or others in the truth of the chriſtian religion, as oppoſed by

theſe ſeveral claſſes of unbelievers, muſt inquire into theſe three things:

Firſt, The genuineneſs of the books of the Old and New Teſtaments.

Secondly, The truth of the principal facts contained in them, both common and miraculous. And,

Thirdly, Their divine authority.

I will endeavour, therefore, to ſtate ſome of the chief evidences for each of theſe important points, having firſt premiſed three preparatory propoſitions, or lemmas, whereby the evidence for any one of them may be transferred upon the other two.

PROP. XVII.

The Genuineneſs of the Scriptures proves the Truth of the principal Facts contained in them.

For, Firſt, It is very rare to meet with any genuine writings of the hiſtorical kind, in which the principal facts are not true; unleſs where both the motives which engaged the author to falſify, and the circumſtances which gave ſome plauſibility to the fiction, are apparent; neither of which can be alleged in the preſent caſe with any colour of reaſon. Where the writer of a hiſtory appears to the world as ſuch, not only his moral ſenſe, but his regard to his character and his intereſt, are ſtrong motives not to falſify in notorious matters; he muſt therefore have ſtronger motives from the oppoſite quarter, and alſo a favourable conjuncture of circumſtances, before he can attempt this.

Secondly, As this is rare in general, ſo it is much more rare, where the writer treats of things that happened in his own time, and under his own cognizance or direction, and communicates his hiſtory to perſons under the ſame circumſtances. All which may be ſaid of the writers of the ſcripture hiſtory.

That

That this, and the following arguments, may be applied with more eaſe and clearneſs, I will here, in one view, refer the books of the Old and New Teſtaments to their proper authors. I ſuppoſe then, that the Pentateuch conſiſts of the writings of *Moſes*, put together by *Samuel*, with a very few additions; that the books of *Joſhua* and *Judges* were, in like manner, collected by him; and the book of *Ruth*, with the firſt part of the firſt book of *Samuel*, written by him; that the latter part of the firſt book of *Samuel*, and the ſecond book, were written by the prophets who ſucceeded *Samuel*, ſuppoſe *Nathan* and *Gad*; that the books of *Kings* and *Chronicles* are extracts from the records of the ſucceeding prophets concerning their own times, and from the public genealogical tables, made by *Ezra*; that the books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* are collections of like records, ſome written by *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* and ſome by their predeceſſors; that the book of *Eſther* was written by ſome eminent *Jew*, in or near the times of the tranſaction there recorded, perhaps *Mordecai*; the book of *Job* by a *Jew* of an uncertain time; the *Pſalms* by *David*, and other pious perſons; the books of *Proverbs* and *Canticles* by *Solomon*; the book of *Eccleſiaſtes* by *Solomon*, or perhaps by a *Jew* of later times, ſpeaking in his perſon, but not with an intention to make him paſs for the author; the prophecies by the prophets whoſe names they bear; and the books of the New Teſtament by the perſons to whom they are uſually aſcribed. There are many internal evidences, and in the caſe of the New Teſtament many external evidences alſo, by which theſe books may be ſhewn to belong to the authors here named. Or, if there be any doubts, they are merely of a critical nature, and do not at all affect the genuineneſs of the books, nor alter the application of theſe arguments, or not materially. Thus, if the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* be ſuppoſed written, not by St. *Paul*, but by *Clement* or *Barnabas*, or any other of their cotemporaries, the evidence

therein

therein given to the miracles performed by Chriſt, and his followers, will not be at all invalidated thereby.

Thirdly, The great importance of the facts mentioned in the ſcriptures makes it ſtill more improbable, that the ſeveral authors ſhould either have attempted to falſify, or have ſucceeded in ſuch an attempt. This is an argument for the truth of the facts, which proves the genuineneſs of the books at the ſame time, as I ſhall ſhew below in a diſtinct propoſition. However, the truth of the facts is inferred more directly from their importance, if the genuineneſs of the ſcriptures be previouſly allowed. The ſame thing may be obſerved of the great number of particular circumſtances of time, place, perſons, &c. mentioned in the ſcriptures, and of the harmony of the books with themſelves, and with each other. Theſe are arguments both for the genuineneſs of the books, and truth of the facts diſtinctly conſidered, and alſo arguments for deducing the truth from the genuineneſs. And indeed the arguments for the general truth of the hiſtory of any age or nation, where regular records have been kept, are ſo interwoven together, and ſupport each other in ſuch a variety of ways, that it is extremely difficult to keep the ideas of them diſtinct, not to anticipate, and not to prove more than the exactneſs of method requires one to prove. Or, in other words, the inconſiſtency of the contrary ſuppoſition is ſo great, that they can ſcarce ſtand long enough to be confuted. Let any one try this in the hiſtory of *France* or *England*, *Greece* or *Rome*.

Fourthly, If the books of the Old and New Teſtaments were written by the perſons to whom they were aſcribed above, *i. e.* if they be genuine, the moral characters of theſe writers afford the ſtrongeſt aſſurance, that the facts aſſerted by them are true. Falſehoods and frauds of a common nature ſhock the moral ſenſe of common men, and are rarely met with, except

except in perſons of abandoned characters: how inconſiſtent then muſt thoſe of the moſt glaring and impious nature be with the higheſt moral characters! That ſuch characters are due to the ſacred writers, appears from the writings themſelves by an internal evidence; but there is alſo ſtrong external evidence in many caſes; and indeed this point is allowed in general by unbelievers. The ſufferings which ſeveral of the writers underwent both in life and death, in atteſtation of the facts delivered by them, is a particular argument in favour of theſe.

Fifthly, The arguments here alleged for proving the truth of the ſcripture hiſtory from the genuineneſs of the books, are as concluſive in reſpect of the miraculous facts, as of the common ones. But beſides this we may obſerve, that if we allow the genuineneſs of the books to be a ſufficient evidence of the common facts mentioned in them, the miraculous facts muſt be allowed alſo, from their cloſe connection with the common ones. It is neceſſary to admit both or neither. It is not to be conceived, that *Moſes* ſhould have delivered the *Iſraelites* from their ſlavery in *Egypt*, or conducted them through the wilderneſs for forty years, at all, in ſuch manner as the common hiſtory repreſents, unleſs we ſuppoſe the miraculous facts intermixed with it to be true alſo. In like manner, the fame of Chriſt's miracles, the multitudes which followed him, the adherence of his diſciples, the jealouſy and hatred of the chief prieſts, ſcribes and phariſees, with many other facts of a common nature, are impoſſible to be accounted for, unleſs we allow, that he did really work miracles. And the ſame obſervations hold in general of the other parts of the ſcripture hiſtory.

Sixthly, There is even a particular argument in favour of the miraculous part of the ſcripture hiſtory, to be drawn from the reluctance of mankind to receive miraculous facts. It is true that this reluctance

is greater in ſome ages and nations than in others; and probable reaſons may be aſſigned why this reluctance was, in general, leſs in ancient times than in the preſent (which, however, are preſumptions that ſome real miracles were then wrought): but it muſt always be conſiderable from the very frame of the human mind, and would be particularly ſo amongſt the *Jews* at the time of Chriſt's appearance, as they had then been without miracles for four hundred years, or more. Now this reluctance muſt make both the writers and readers very much upon their guard; and if it be now one of the chief prejudices againſt revealed religion, as unbelievers unanimouſly aſſert, it is but reaſonable to allow alſo, that it would be a ſtrong check upon the publication of a miraculous hiſtory at or near the time when the miracles were ſaid to be performed, *i. e.* it will be a ſtrong confirmation of ſuch an hiſtory, if its genuineneſs be granted previouſly.

And, upon the whole, we may certainly conclude, that the principal facts, both common and miraculous, mentioned in the ſcriptures, muſt be true, if their genuineneſs be allowed. The objection againſt all miraculous facts will be conſidered below after the other arguments for the truth of the ſcripture miracles have been alleged.

The converſe of this propoſition is alſo true, *i. e.* if the principal facts mentioned in the ſcriptures be true, they muſt be genuine writings. And though this converſe propoſition may, at firſt ſight, appear to be of little importance for the eſtabliſhment of chriſtianity, inaſmuch as the genuineneſs of the ſcriptures is only made uſe of as a medium whereby to prove the truth of the facts mentioned in them, yet it will be found otherwiſe upon farther examination. For there are many evidences for the truth of particular facts mentioned in the ſcriptures, ſuch, for inſtance, as thoſe taken from natural hiſtory, and the

cotemporary

cotemporary profane hiſtory, which no ways preſuppoſe, but, on the contrary, prove the genuineneſs of the ſcriptures; and this genuineneſs, thus proved, may, by the arguments alleged under this propoſition, be extended to infer the truth of the reſt of the facts. Which is not to argue in a circle, and to prove the truth of the ſcripture hiſtory from its truth; but to prove the truth of thoſe facts, which are not atteſted by natural or civil hiſtory, from thoſe which are, by the medium of the genuineneſs of the ſcriptures.

PROP. XVIII.

The Genuineneſs of the Scriptures proves their divine Authority.

THE truth of this propoſition, as it reſpects the book of *Daniel*, ſeems to have been acknowledged by *Porphyry*, inaſmuch as he could no ways invalidate the divine authority of this book, implied by the accompliſhment of the prophecies therein delivered, but by aſſerting, that they were written after the event, *i. e.* were forgeries. But the ſame thing holds of many of the other books of the Old and New Teſtaments, many of them having unqueſtionable evidences of the divine foreknowledge, if they be allowed genuine. I reſerve the prophetical evidences to be diſcuſſed hereafter, and therefore ſhall only ſuggeſt the following inſtances here, in order to illuſtrate the propoſition, viz. *Moſes*'s prophecy concerning the captivity of the *Iſraelites*, of a ſtate not yet erected; *Iſaiah*'s concerning *Cyrus*; *Jeremiah*'s concerning the duration of the *Babyloniſh* captivity; Chriſt's concerning the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the captivity that was to follow; St. *John*'s concerning the great corruption of the chriſtian church; and *Daniel*'s concerning the fourth empire in its declenſion; which laſt was extant in *Porphyry*'s time

at

at leaſt, *i. e.* before the events which it ſo fitly repreſents.

The ſame thing follows from the ſublimity and excellence of the doctrines contained in the ſcriptures. Theſe no ways ſuit the ſuppoſed authors, *i. e.* the ages when they lived, their educations or occupations; and therefore, if they were the real authors, there is a neceſſity of admitting the divine aſſiſtance.

The converſe of this propoſition, viz. that the divine authority of the ſcriptures infers their genuineneſs, will, I ſuppoſe, be readily acknowledged by all. And it may be uſed for the ſame purpoſes as the converſe of the laſt. For there are ſeveral evidences for the divine authority of the ſcriptures, which are direct and immediate, and prior to the conſideration both of their genuineneſs, and of the truth of the facts contained in them. Of this kind is the character of Chriſt, as it may be collected from his diſcourſes and actions related in the goſpels. The great and manifeſt ſuperiority of this to all other characters, real and fictitious, proves, at once, his divine miſſion, excluſively of all other conſiderations. Suppoſe now the genuineneſs of St. *Luke*'s goſpel to be deduced in this way, the genuineneſs of the *Acts* of the Apoſtles may be deduced from it, and of St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles from the *Acts*, by the uſual critical methods. And when the genuineneſs of the *Acts* of the Apoſtles, and of St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles, is thus deduced, the truth of the facts mentioned in them will follow from it by the laſt propoſition; and their divine authority by this.

PROP.

PROP. XIX.

The Truth of the principal Facts contained in the Scriptures proves their divine Authority.

THIS propoſition may be proved two ways; Firſt, excluſively of the evidences of natural religion, ſuch as thoſe delivered in the laſt chapter; and, Secondly, from the previous eſtabliſhment of the great truths of natural religion. And, Firſt,

It is evident, that the great power, knowledge, and benevolence, which appeared in Chriſt, the prophets and apoſtles, according to the ſcripture accounts, do, as it were, command aſſent and ſubmiſſion from all thoſe who receive theſe accounts as hiſtorical truths; and that, though they are not able to deduce, or have not, in fact, deduced the evidences of natural religion; nay, though they ſhould have many doubts about them. The frame of the human mind is ſuch, that the ſcripture hiſtory, allowed to be true, muſt convince us, that Chriſt, the prophets and apoſtles, were endued with a power greater than human, and acted by the authority of a being of the higheſt wiſdom and goodneſs.

Secondly, If natural religion be previouſly eſtabliſhed, the truth of the principal facts of the ſcriptures proves their divine authority, in an eaſier and more convincing manner.

For, Firſt, The power ſhewn in the miracles wrought by Chriſt, the prophets and apoſtles, the knowledge in their prophecies, and their good moral characters, ſhew them to be, in an eminent manner, the children, ſervants, and meſſengers, of him, who is now previouſly acknowledged to be infinite in power, knowledge, and goodneſs.

Secondly, Chriſt, the prophets and apoſtles, make an expreſs claim to a divine miſſion. Now, it cannot be reconciled to God's moral attributes of juſtice,

juſtice, veracity, mercy, &c. that he ſhould permit theſe perſons to make ſuch a claim falſely, and then endue them, or ſuffer them to be endued, with ſuch credentials, as muſt ſupport ſuch a falſe claim. Their claim is not, therefore, a falſe one, if we admit their credentials; or, in other words, the truth of the principal facts mentioned in the ſcriptures proves the divine miſſion of Chriſt, the prophets, and apoſtles, *i. e.* the divine authority of the ſcriptures.

The ſame obſervations may be made upon the converſe of this propoſition, as upon thoſe of the two laſt.

And thus the genuineneſs of the ſcriptures, the truth of the principal facts contained in them, and their divine authority, appear to be ſo connected with each other, that any one being eſtabliſhed upon independent principles, the other two may be inferred from it. The firſt and ſecond of theſe points are, indeed, more evidently ſubſervient to the laſt, than the laſt is to them; for, if the laſt be allowed, it is at once all that the believer contends for, whereas ſome perſons appear to admit, or not to reject, the firſt, or even the ſecond, and yet are ranked under the title of unbelievers. It is neceſſary to ſhew to ſuch perſons, that the firſt and ſecond infer each other mutually, and both of them the laſt; and it may be of ſome uſe to ſhew, that the laſt infers the two firſt in ſuch a way, as to caſt ſome light upon itſelf, without arguing in a circle; the divine authority of one book being made to infer the genuineneſs of another, or the facts contained in it, *i. e.* its divine authority alſo.

Here it may not be amiſs to ſay ſomething concerning the divine inſpiration of the ſcriptures. Now there are three different ſuppoſitions, which may be made concerning this point.

The firſt and loweſt is, that all the paſſages delivered by *Moſes* and the prophets, as coming from God,

God, and by the evangeliſts, as the words of Chriſt, alſo the revelation given to St. *John* in a divine viſion, with all parallel portions of ſcripture, muſt be conſidered as divinely inſpired, and as having immediate divine authority; elſe we cannot allow even common authority to theſe books; but that the common hiſtory, the reaſonings of the apoſtles from the Old Teſtament, and perhaps ſome of their opinions, may be conſidered as coming merely from themſelves, and therefore, though highly to be regarded, are not of unqueſtionable authority. The arguments for this hypotheſis may be, that ſince the ſcriptures have ſuffered by tranſcribers, like other books, a perfect exactneſs in the original, as to minute particulars, (in which alone it has ſuffered, or could ſuffer, from tranſcribers), is needleſs; that *Moſes* and the prophets, the evangeliſts and apoſtles, had natural talents for writing hiſtory, applying the ſcriptures, reaſoning, and delivering their opinions; and that God works by natural means, where there are ſuch; that the apoſtles were ignorant of the true extent of *Chriſt*'s kingdom for a conſiderable time after his reſurrection, and perhaps miſtaken about his ſecond coming; that God might intend, that nothing in this world ſhould be perfect, our bleſſed Lord excepted; that ſome hiſtorical facts ſeem difficult to be reconciled to one another, and ſome applications of paſſages from the Old Teſtament by the writers of the New, with their reaſonings thereupon, inconcluſive and unſatisfactory; that the writers themſelves no where lay claim to infallibility, when ſpeaking from themſelves; and that *Hermas*, *Clemens Romanus*, and *Barnabas*, who were apoſtolical perſons, ſeem evidently to have reaſoned in an inconcluſive manner.

The ſecond hypotheſis is, that hiſtorical incidents of ſmall moment, with matters of a nature foreign to religion, may indeed not have divine au-

thority; but that all the reſt of the ſcriptures, the reaſonings, the application of the prophecies, and even the doctrines of inferior note, muſt be inſpired; elſe what can be meant by the gifts of the ſpirit, particularly that of prophecy, *i. e.* of inſtructing others? How can *Chriſt*'s promiſe of the Comforter, who ſhould lead his diſciples into *all truth*, be fulfilled? Will not the very eſſentials of religion, the divine miſſion of *Chriſt*, providence, and a future ſtate, be weakened by thus ſuppoſing the ſacred writers to be miſtaken in religious points? And though the hiſtory and the reaſonings of the ſcriptures have the marks of being written in the ſame manner as other books, *i. e.* may ſeem not to be inſpired, yet a ſecret influence might conduct the writers in every thing of moment, even when they did not perceive it, or reflect upon it themſelves; it being evident from obvious reaſonings, as well as from the foregoing theory, that the natural workings of the mind are not to be diſtinguiſhed from thoſe, which a being that has a ſufficient power over our intellectual frame, might excite in us.

The third and laſt hypotheſis is, that the whole ſcriptures are inſpired, even the moſt minute hiſtorical paſſages, the ſalutations, incidental mention of common affairs, &c. The arguments in favour of this hypotheſis are, that many parts of ſcripture appear to have double, or perhaps manifold ſenſes; that not one jot or tittle of the law (*i. e.* of the whole ſcriptures of both the Old and New Teſtaments, in an enlarged way of interpretation, which, however, ſeems juſtifiable by parallel inſtances) ſhall periſh; that the Bible, *i. e.* the book of books, as we now have it, appears to have been remarkably diſtinguiſhed by Providence from all other writings, even of good *Jews* and Chriſtians, and to admit of a vindication in reſpect of ſmall difficulties, and ſmall ſeeming inconſiſtencies, as well as of great ones, every

day

day more and more as we advance in knowledge; and that effects of the ſame kind with divine inſpiration, viz. the working of miracles, and the gift of prophecy, ſubſiſted during the times of the authors of the books of the Old and New Teſtaments, and even in all, or nearly all, of theſe writers; alſo that they extended, in ſome caſes, to very minute things.

I will not preſume to determine which of theſe three ſuppoſitions approaches neareſt to the truth. The following propoſitions will, I hope, eſtabliſh the firſt of them at leaſt, and prove the genuineneſs of the ſcriptures, the truth of the facts contained in them, and their divine authority, to ſuch a degree, as that we need not fear to make them the rule of our lives, and the ground of our future expectations; which is all that is abſolutely neceſſary for the proof of the chriſtian religion, and the ſatisfaction and comfort of religious perſons. I even believe, that the following evidences favour the ſecond hypotheſis ſtrongly, and exclude all errors and imperfections of note; nay, I am inclined to believe, that ſerious, inquiſitive men can ſcarce reſt there, but will be led by the ſucceſſive clearing of difficulties, and unfolding of the moſt wonderful truths, to believe the whole ſcriptures to be inſpired, and to abound with numberleſs uſes and applications, of which we yet know nothing. Let future ages determine. The evidently miraculous nature of one part, viz. the prophetical, diſpoſes the mind to believe the whole to be far above human invention, or even penetration, till ſuch time as our underſtandings ſhall be farther opened by the events which are to precede the ſecond coming of *Chriſt*. In the mean while, let critics and learned men of all kinds have full liberty to examine the ſacred books; and let us be ſparing in our cenſures of each other. *Let us judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come; and then ſhall every man have praiſe of God.* Sobriety of mind, humility, and piety, are requiſite in

the purſuit of knowledge of every kind, and much more in that of ſacred. I have here endeavoured to be impartial to each hypotheſis, and juſt to hint what I apprehend each party would or might ſay in defence of their own. However, *they are all brethren*, and ought not to *fall out by the way*.

PROP. XX.

The Manner in which the Books of the Old and New Teſtaments have been handed down from Age to Age, proves both their Genuineneſs, and the Truth of the principal Facts contained in them.

For, Firſt, It reſembles the manner in which all other genuine books and true hiſtories have been conveyed down to poſterity. As the writings of the *Greek* and *Roman* poets, orators, philoſophers and hiſtorians, were eſteemed by theſe nations to be tranſmitted to them by their forefathers in a continued ſucceſſion, from the times when the reſpective authors lived, ſo have the books of the Old Teſtament by the *Jewiſh* nation, and thoſe of the New by the *Chriſtians*; and it is an additional evidence in the laſt caſe, that the primitive chriſtians were not a diſtinct nation, but a great multitude of people diſperſed through all the nations of the *Roman* empire, and even extending itſelf beyond the bounds of that empire. As the *Greeks* and *Romans* always believed the principal facts of their hiſtorical books, ſo the *Jews* and *Chriſtians* did more, and never ſeem to have doubted of the truth of any part of theirs. In ſhort, whatever can be ſaid of the traditional authority due to the *Greek* and *Roman* writers, ſomething analogous to this, and for the moſt part of greater weight, may be urged for the *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian*. Now, I ſuppoſe that all ſober-minded men admit the books uſually

uſually aſcribed to the *Greek* and *Roman* hiſtorians, philoſophers, &c. to be genuine, and the principal facts related or alluded to in them to be true, and that one chief evidence for this is the general traditionary one here recited. They ought therefore to pay the ſame regard to the books of the Old and New Teſtaments, ſince there are the ſame or greater reaſons for it.

Secondly, If we conſider the circumſtances recited in the laſt paragraph, it will appear, that theſe traditionary evidences are ſufficient ones; and we ſhall have a real argument, as well as one *ad hominem*, for receiving books ſo handed down to us. For it is not to be conceived, that whole nations ſhould either be impoſed upon themſelves, or concur to deceive others, by forgeries of books or facts. Theſe books and facts muſt therefore, in general, be genuine and true; and it is a ſtrong additional evidence of this, that all nations muſt be jealous of forgeries, for the ſame reaſons that we are.

Here it may be objected, that as we reject the prodigies related by the *Greek* and *Roman* writers, though we admit the common hiſtory, ſo we ought alſo to reject the ſcripture miracles. To this I anſwer,

Firſt, That the ſcripture hiſtory is ſupported by far ſtronger evidences than the *Greek* or *Roman*, as will appear in the following propoſitions.

Secondly, That many of the ſcripture miracles are related by eye-witneſſes, and were of a public nature, of long duration, attended by great and laſting effects, inſeparably connected with the common hiſtory, and evidently ſuitable to our notions of a wiſe and good Providence, which cannot be ſaid of thoſe related by the Pagan writers.

Thirdly, That the ſcripture miracles not attended by theſe cogent circumſtances are ſupported by their connection with ſuch as are; and that after we have

admitted theſe, there remains no longer any preſumption againſt thoſe from their miraculous nature.

Fourthly, If there be any ſmall number found amongſt the Pagan miracles, atteſted by ſuch like evidences as the principal ones for the ſcripture miracles, I do not ſee how they can be rejected; but it will not follow, that the ſcripture miracles are falſe, becauſe ſome of the Pagan ones are true.

PROP. XXI.

The great Importance of the Hiſtories, Precepts, Promiſes, Threatenings, and Prophecies contained in the Scriptures, are Evidences both of their Genuineneſs, and of the Truth of the principal Facts mentioned in them.

THIS is one of the inſtances in which the evidences for the ſcriptures are ſuperior, beyond compariſon, to thoſe for any other ancient books. Let us take a ſhort review of this importance in its ſeveral particulars.

The hiſtory of the creation, fall, deluge, longevity of the patriarchs, diſperſion of mankind, calling of *Abraham*, deſcent of *Jacob* with his family into *Egypt*, and the precepts of abſtaining from blood, and of circumciſion, were of ſo much concern, either to mankind in general, or to the *Iſraelites* in particular, and ſome of them of ſo extraordinary a nature, as that it could not be an indifferent matter to the people amongſt whom the account given of them in *Geneſis* was firſt publiſhed, whether they received them or not. Suppoſe this account to be firſt publiſhed amongſt the *Iſraelites* by *Moſes*, and alſo to be then confirmed by clear, univerſal, uninterrupted tradition (which is poſſible and probable, according to the hiſtory itſelf), and it will be eaſy to conceive, upon this true ſuppoſition, how this account ſhould be

be handed down from age to age amongſt the *Jews*, and received by them as indubitable. Suppoſe this account to be falſe, *i. e.* ſuppoſe that there were no ſuch evidences and veſtiges of theſe hiſtories and precepts, and it will be difficult to conceive how this could have happened, let the time of publication be as it will. If early, the people would reject the account at once for want of a clear tradition, which the account would itſelf give them reaſon to expect. If late, it would be natural to inquire how the author came to be informed of things never known before to others.

If it be ſaid, that he delivered them as communicated to him by revelation (which yet cannot well be ſaid on account of the many references in *Geneſis* to the remaining veſtiges of the things related), theſe ſurprizing, intereſting particulars would at leaſt be an embarraſſment upon his fictitious credentials, and engage his cotemporaries to look narrowly into them.

If it be ſaid, that there were many coſmogonies and theogonies current amongſt the Pagans, which yet are evidently fictions; I anſwer, that theſe were, in general, regarded only as amuſing fictions; however, that they had ſome truths in them, either expreſſed in plain words, or concealed in figures; and that their agreement with the book of *Geneſis*, as far as they are conſiſtent with one another, or have any appearance of truth, is a remarkable evidence in favour of this book. It is endleſs to make all the poſſible ſuppoſitions and objections of this kind; but it appears to me, that the more are made, the more will the truth and genuineneſs of the ſcriptures be eſtabliſhed thereby.

It ought to be added, in relation to the precepts of abſtaining from blood, and circumciſion, beforementioned, that if the firſt was common to mankind, or was known to have been ſo, the laſt peculiar to the deſcendants of *Abraham*, at the time of the publi-

cation of the book of *Geneſis*, this confirms it; if otherwiſe, would contribute to make it rejected. If neither the practices themſelves, nor any veſtiges of them, ſubſiſted at all, the book muſt be rejected. The difficulty of deducing theſe practices from the principles of human nature ought to be conſidered here; as it tends to prove their divine original agreeably to the accounts given of them in *Geneſis*.

Let us next come to the law of *Moſes*. This was extremely burdenſome, expenſive, ſevere, particularly upon the crime of idolatry, to which all mankind were then extravagantly prone, and abſurd, according to the common judgment of mankind, in the inſtances of forbidding to provide themſelves with horſes for war, and commanding all the males of the whole nation to appear at *Jeruſalem* three times in a year. At the ſame time, it claims a divine authority every where, and appeals to facts of the moſt notorious kinds, and to cuſtoms and ceremonies of the moſt peculiar nature, as the memorials of theſe facts. We cannot conceive, then, that any nation, with ſuch motives to reject, and ſuch opportunities of detecting, the forgery of the books of *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomy*, ſhould yet receive them, and ſubmit to this heavy yoke. That they ſhould often throw it off in part, and for a time, and rebel againſt the divine authority of their law, though ſufficiently evidenced, is eaſily to be accounted for from what we ſee and feel in ourſelves and others every day; but that they ſhould ever return and repent, ever ſubmit to it, unleſs it had divine authority, is utterly incredible. It was not a matter of ſuch ſmall importance, as that they could content themſelves with a ſuperficial examination, with a leſs examination than would be ſufficient to detect ſo notorious a forgery; and this holds at whatever time we ſuppoſe theſe books to be publiſhed.

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That the *Jews* did thus ſubmit to the law of *Moſes*, is evident from the books of the Old and New Teſtaments, if we allow them the leaſt truth and genuineneſs, or even from profane writers; nay, I may ſay, from the preſent obſervance of it by the *Jews* ſcattered through all the kingdoms of the world.

If it be ſaid, that other nations have aſcribed divine authority to their lawgivers, and ſubmitted to very ſevere laws; I anſwer, Firſt, That the pretences of lawgivers amongſt the Pagans to inſpiration, and the ſubmiſſion of the people to them, may be accounted for in the degree in which they are found, from the then circumſtances of things, without having recourſe to real inſpiration; and particularly, that if we admit the patriarchal revelations related and intimated by *Moſes*, and his own divine legation, it will appear, that the heathen lawgivers copied after theſe; which is a ſtrong argument for admitting them. Secondly, That there is no inſtance amongſt the Pagans, of a body of laws being produced at once, and remaining without addition afterwards; but that they were compiled by degrees, according to the exigencies of the ſtate, the prevalence of a particular faction, or the authority of ſome particular perſons, who were all ſtyled lawgivers, as *Draco* and *Solon* at *Athens:* that they were made, in general, not to curb, but humour, the genius of the people; and were afterwards repealed and altered from the ſame cauſes: whereas the body politic of the *Iſraelites* took upon itſelf a complete form at once, and has preſerved this form in great meaſure to the preſent time, and that under the higheſt external diſadvantages; which is an inſtance quite without parallel, and ſhews the great opinion which they had of their law, *i. e.* its great importance to them.

If it be ſaid, that the laws of the *Iſraelites* were not perhaps impoſed at once, but grew up by degrees,

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as in other nations, this will make the difficulty of receiving the books of *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomy*, in which the contrary, with all the particular circumſtances, is aſſerted, greater than ever. In ſhort, of all the fictions or forgeries that can happen amongſt any people, the moſt improbable is that of their body of civil laws; and it ſeems to be utterly impoſſible in the caſe of the law of *Moſes*.

The next part of the ſcriptures, whoſe importance we are to conſider, is the hiſtory contained in the books of *Joſhua*, *Judges*, *Ruth*, *Samuel*, *Kings*, *Chronicles*, *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah*, and extending from the Death of *Moſes* to the re-eſtabliſhment of the *Jews* after the *Babyloniſh* captivity, by *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*. Now, in this hiſtory are the following important facts, moſt of which muſt be ſuppoſed to leave ſuch veſtiges of themſelves, either external viſible ones, or internal in the minds and memories of the people, as would verify them, if true; make them be rejected, if falſe. The conqueſt of the land of *Canaan*, the diviſion of it, and the appointment of cities for the prieſts and Levites by *Joſhua*; the frequent ſlaveries of the *Iſraelites* to the neighbouring kings, and their deliverance by the judges; the erection of a kingdom by *Samuel*; the tranſlation of this kingdom from *Saul*'s family to *David*, with his conqueſts; the glory of *Solomon*'s kingdom; the building of the temple; the diviſion of the kingdom; the idolatrous worſhip ſet up at *Dan* and *Bethel*; the captivity of the *Iſraelites* by the kings of *Aſſyria*; the captivity of the *Jews* by *Nebuchadnezzar*; the deſtruction of their temple; their return under *Cyrus*, rebuilding the temple under *Darius Hyſtaſpis*, and re-eſtabliſhment under *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, by *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*; theſe events are ſome of them the moſt glorious, ſome of them the moſt ſhameful that can well happen to any people. How can we reconcile forgeries of ſuch oppoſite kinds, and eſpecially

cially as they are interwoven togther? But, indeed, the facts are of ſuch conſequence, notoriety, and permanency in their effects, that neither could any particular perſons amongſt the *Iſraelites* firſt project the deſign of feigning them, nor their own people concur with ſuch a deſign, nor the neighbouring nations permit the fiction to paſs. Nothing could make a jealous multitude amongſt the *Iſraelites* or neighbouring nations acquieſce, but the invincible evidence of the facts here alleged. And the ſame obſervations hold of numberleſs other facts of leſſer note, which it would be tedious to recount; and of miraculous facts as much, or rather more than others. Beſides which, it is to be noted, that all theſe have ſuch various neceſſary connections with each other, that they cannot be ſeparated, as has been already remarked.

And all this will, I preſume, be readily acknowledged, upon ſuppoſition that the ſeveral books were publiſhed in or near the times of the facts therein recorded. But, ſay the objectors, this will not hold in ſo ſtrong a manner, if the books be publiſhed after theſe times. Let us take an extreme caſe then, and ſuppoſe all theſe hiſtorical books forged by *Ezra*. But this is evidently impoſſible. Things of ſo important and notorious a kind, ſo glorious and ſo ſhameful to the people, for whoſe ſake they were forged, would have been rejected with the utmoſt indignation, unleſs there were the ſtrongeſt and moſt genuine footſteps of theſe things already amongſt the people. They were therefore in part true. But many additions were made by *Ezra*, ſay the objectors. I anſwer, if theſe were of importance, the difficulty returns. If not, then all the important facts are true. Beſides, what motive could any one have for making additions, of no importance? Again, if there were any ancient writings extant, *Ezra* muſt either copy after them, which deſtroys the preſent ſuppoſition;

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or differ from and oppoſe them, which would betray him. If there were no ſuch ancient writings, the people could not but inquire in matters of importance, for what reaſons *Ezra* was ſo particular in things of which there was neither any memory, nor account in writing. If it be ſaid, that the people did regard what *Ezra* had thus forged, but let it paſs uncontradicted; this is again to make the things of ſmall or no importance. Beſides, why ſhould *Ezra* write, if no one would read or regard? Farther, *Ezra* muſt, like all other men, have friends, enemies and rivals; and ſome or all of theſe would have been a check upon him, and a ſecurity againſt him in matters of importance.

If, inſtead of ſuppoſing *Ezra* to have forged all theſe books at once, we ſuppoſe them forged ſucceſſively, one, two, or three centuries after the facts related; we ſhall, from this intermediate ſuppoſition, have (beſides the difficulty of accounting for ſuch a regular ſucceſſion of impoſtures in matters ſo important) a mixture of the difficulties recited in the two preceding paragraphs, the ſum total of which will be the ſame, or nearly the ſame, as in either of thoſe caſes. And, upon the whole, the forgery of the annals of the *Iſraelites* appears to be impoſſible, as well as that of the body of their civil laws.

If it be ſaid, that the hiſtories and annals of other nations have many fictions and falſehoods in them; I anſwer, that the ſuperior importance of the events which happened to the *Jewiſh* nation, and the miraculous nature of many of them, occaſioned there being recorded at the then preſent times, in the way of ſimple narration, the command of God alſo concurring, as it ſeems; and that thus all addition, variety, and embelliſhment, was prevented: whereas the hiſtories of the originals of other nations were not committed to writing till long after the events, after they had been corrupted and obſcured by numberleſs

berleſs fables and fictions, as is well known. There are many other circumſtances peculiar to the *Jewiſh* hiſtory, which eſtabliſh its truth even in the minuteſt things, as I ſhall ſhew in the following propoſitions; and I hope the reader will ſee, in the progreſs of the argument, that the ſame method of reaſoning which proves the *Jewiſh* hiſtory to be rigorouſly exact, proves alſo, that the hiſtories of other nations may be expected to be partly true, and partly falſe, as they are agreed to be by all learned and ſober-minded men.

I paſs over the books of *Eſther*, *Job*, the *Pſalms*, *Proverbs*, *Eccleſiaſtes*, and *Canticles*, as not having much relation to this propoſition; and proceed to the conſideration of the Prophecies.

Theſe contain the moſt important precepts, promiſes, threatenings, and predictions, *i. e.* prophecies peculiarly ſo called, beſides the indirect and incidental mention of the great events recorded in the hiſtorical books. And as they are full of the ſevereſt reproofs and denunciations againſt all ranks, king, governors and great men ſubordinate to him, prieſts, prophets, and people, one cannot expect, that they ſhould be favourably received by any, but thoſe of the beſt moral characters; and theſe muſt be the firſt to detect and expoſe a forgery, if there was any. So that the prophecies, if they were forgeries, could not be able to ſtand ſo rigorous an examination as the importance of the caſe would prompt all ranks to. And here all the arguments before uſed to ſhew, that the hiſtorical books could neither be forged at the time of the facts, nor ſo late as *Ezra*'s time, nor in any intermediate one, are applicable with the ſame or even greater force. Beſides which, it is to be obſerved of the predictions in particular, that, if they were publiſhed before the events, they could not be forgeries; if afterwards, there would not be wanting amongſt the *Jews* many perſons of the ſame diſpoſition with *Porphyry*, and the preſent objectors to the

the genuineneſs of the prophecies, and the truth of the facts related or implied in them, who upon that ſuppoſition would have met with ſucceſs, as *Porphyry*, and the ancient objectors would have done long ago, had their objections been ſolid. Infidelity is the natural and neceſſary product of human wickedneſs and weakneſs; we ſee it, in all other things, as well as in religion, whenſoever the intereſts and paſſions of men are oppoſite to truth; and the preſent objectors to the truth of revealed religion may be aſſured, that the ancient ones, the murmuring *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs, the rebellious *Jews* before Chriſt, and both *Jews* and *Gentiles* ſince Chriſt, have done juſtice to their cauſe.

We come, in the laſt place, to conſider the importance of the books of the New Teſtament. Whoever then received theſe in ancient times as genuine and true, muſt not only forſake all ſinful pleaſures, but expoſe himſelf to various hardſhips and dangers, and even to death itſelf. They had indeed a future glory promiſed to them, with which the ſufferings of the preſent time were not worthy to be compared. But then this glory, being future, muſt be ſupported with the moſt inconteſtable evidences; elſe it could have no power againſt the oppoſite motives; and both together muſt ſo rouſe the mind, as to make men exert themſelves to the uttermoſt, till they had received full ſatisfaction. Beſides which, it is to be obſerved, that even joy, and the greatneſs of an expectation, incline men to diſbelieve, and to examine with a ſcrupulous exactneſs, as well as fear and diſlike.

As to thoſe who did not receive the doctrines of the New Teſtament, and the facts there related and implied, they would have ſufficient motives to detect the forgery or falſehood, had there been any ſuch. They were all condemned for their unbelief; many for their groſs vices; the *Jew* for his darling partiality to his own nation, and ceremonial law; and the

the *Gentile* for his idolatry and polytheiſm; and the moſt dreadful puniſhments threatened to all in a future ſtate. Now theſe were important charges, and alarming conſiderations, which, if they did not put men upon a fair examination, would, at leaſt, make them deſirous to find fault, to detect and expoſe, and, if they had diſcovered any fraud, to publiſh it with the utmoſt triumph. The books of the New Teſtament could not but be of ſo much importance to the unbelievers of the primitive times, as to excite them to vigilance and earneſtneſs, in endeavouring to diſcredit and deſtroy them. All which is abundantly confirmed by the hiſtory of thoſe times. And indeed caſes of the ſame kind, though not of the ſame degree, occur now to daily obſervation, which the reader will do well to call to mind. Thus it comes to paſs on one hand, that frauds and impoſtures are cruſhed in the birth; and, on the other, that wicked men labour againſt the truth in the moſt unreaſonable and inconſiſtent ways, and are led on from one degree of obſtinacy, prevarication, and infatuation, to another, without limits.

It may be added here, that the perſons reproved and condemned in the Goſpels, in the *Acts* of the Apoſtles, by St. *Paul* in his Epiſtles, by St. *Peter* in his ſecond Epiſtle, by St. *John* and St. *Jude* in their Epiſtles, and by St. *John* in the *Revelation*, viz. the five churches, and the *Nicolaitans*, could not but endeavour to vindicate themſelves. The books were all of a public nature, and theſe reproofs particularly ſo, as being intended to guard others.

I have now gone through the ſeveral parts of the ſcripture, and ſhewn briefly how the importance of each would be a ſecurity againſt forgery and fiction in that part. I will now add ſome general evidences to the ſame purpoſe.

Firſt, then, It is certain, that both *Jews* and *Chriſtians* have undergone the ſevereſt perſecutions and ſufferings

ſufferings on account of their ſacred books, and yet never could be prevailed with to deliver them up: which ſhews that they thought them of the higheſt importance, moſt genuine and true.

Secondly, The preſervation of the law of *Moſes*, which is probably the firſt book that was ever written in any language, while ſo many others more modern have been loſt, ſhews the great regard paid to it. The ſame holds in a leſs degree of moſt of the other books of the Old Teſtament, ſince moſt of them are ancienter than the oldeſt *Greek* hiſtorians. And as the records of all the neighbouring nations are loſt; we muſt ſuppoſe thoſe of the *Jews* to have been preſerved, from their importance, or ſome other ſuch cauſe, as may be an equal evidence of their genuineneſs and truth.

Thirdly, The great importance of all the ſacred books appears from the many early tranſlations and paraphraſes of them. The ſame tranſlations and paraphraſes muſt be an effectual means of ſecuring their integrity and purity, if we could ſuppoſe any deſign to corrupt them.

Fourthly, The heſitation and difficulty with which a few books of the New Teſtament were received into the canon, ſhew the great care and concern of the primitive chriſtians about their canon, *i. e.* the high importance of the books received into it; and are therefore a ſtrong evidence, firſt, for the genuineneſs and truth of the books which were received without heſitation; and then for theſe others, ſince they were received univerſally at laſt.

Fifthly, The great religious hatred and animoſity which ſubſiſted between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, and between ſeveral of the ancient ſects amongſt the chriſtians, ſhew of what importance they all thought their ſacred books; and would make them watch over one another with a jealous eye.

PROP.

PROP. XXII.

The Language, Style, and Manner of Writing uſed in the Books of the Old and New Teſtaments, are Arguments of their Genuineneſs.

HERE I obſerve, Firſt, That the *Hebrew* language, in which the Old Teſtament was written, being the language of an ancient people, and one that had little intercourſe with their neighbours, and whoſe neighbours alſo ſpake a language that had great affinity with their own, would not change ſo faſt as modern languages have done, ſince nations have been variouſly mixed with one another, and trade, arts, and ſciences, greatly extended. Yet ſome changes there muſt be, in paſſing from the time of *Moſes* to that of *Malachi*. Now, I apprehend, that the Biblical *Hebrew* correſponds to this criterion with ſo much exactneſs, that a conſiderable argument may be deduced thence in favour of the genuineneſs of the books of the Old Teſtament.

Secondly, The books of the Old Teſtament have too conſiderable a diverſity of ſtyle to be the work either of one *Jew* (for a *Jew* he muſt be on account of the language), or of any ſet of cotemporary *Jews*. If therefore they be all forgeries, there muſt be a ſucceſſion of impoſtors in different ages, who have concurred to impoſe upon poſterity, which is inconceivable. To ſuppoſe part forged, and part genuine, is very harſh, neither would this ſuppoſition, if admitted, be ſatisfactory.

Thirdly, The *Hebrew* language ceaſed to be ſpoken, as a living language, ſoon after the time of the *Babyloniſh* captivity: but it would be difficult or impoſſible to forge any thing in it, after it was become a dead language. For there was no grammar made for the *Hebrew* till many ages after; and, as it

is difficult to write in a dead language with exactneſs, even by the help of a grammar, ſo it ſeems impoſſible without it. All the books of the Old Teſtament muſt therefore be, nearly, as ancient as the *Babyloniſh* captivity; and, ſince they could not all be written in the ſame age, ſome muſt be conſiderably more ancient; which would bring us again to a ſucceſſion of conſpiring impoſtors.

Fourthly, This laſt remark may perhaps afford a new argument for the genuineneſs of the book of *Daniel*, if any were wanting. But indeed the Septuagint tranſlation ſhews both this, and all the other books of the Old Teſtament to have been conſidered as ancient books, ſoon after the times of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, at leaſt.

Fifthly, There is a ſimplicity of ſtyle, and an unaffected manner of writing, in all the books of the Old Teſtament; which is a very ſtrong evidence of their genuineneſs, even excluſively of the ſuitableneſs of this circumſtance to the times of the ſuppoſed authors.

Sixthly, The ſtyle of the New Teſtament is alſo ſimple and unaffected, and perfectly ſuited to the time, places, and perſons. Let it be obſerved farther, that the uſe of words and phraſes is ſuch, alſo the ideas, and method of reaſoning, as that the books of the New Teſtament could be written by none but perſons originally *Jews*; which would bring the inquiry into a little narrower compaſs, if there was any occaſion for this.

One may alſo obſerve, that the narrations and precepts of both Old and New Teſtament are delivered without heſitation; the writers teach as having authority; which circumſtance is peculiar to thoſe, who have both a clear knowledge of what they deliver, and a perfect integrity of heart.

PROP.

PROP. XXIII.

The very great Number of particular Circumſtances of Time, Place, Perſons, &c. mentioned in the Scriptures, are Arguments both of their Genuineneſs and Truth.

THAT the reader may underſtand what I mean by theſe particular circumſtances, I will recite ſome of the principal heads, under which they may be claſſed.

There are then mentioned in the book of *Geneſis*, the rivers of paradiſe, the generations of the antediluvian patriarchs, the deluge with its circumſtances, the place where the ark reſted, the building of the tower of *Babel*, the confuſion of tongues, the diſperſion of mankind, or the diviſion of the earth amongſt the poſterity of *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*, the generations of the poſtdiluvian patriarchs, with the gradual ſhortening of human life after the flood, the ſojournings of *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, with many particulars of the ſtate of *Canaan*, and the neighbouring countries in their times, the deſtruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, the ſtate of the land of *Edom*, both before and after *Eſau*'s time, and the deſcent of *Jacob* into *Egypt*, with the ſtate of *Egypt* before *Moſes*'s time.

In the book of *Exodus* are the plagues of *Egypt*, the inſtitution of the paſſover, the paſſage through the *Red Sea*, with the deſtruction of *Pharaoh* and his hoſt there, the miracle of manna, the victory over the *Amalekites*, the ſolemn delivery of the law from mount *Sinai*, many particular laws both moral and ceremonial, the worſhip of the golden calf, and a very minute deſcription of the tabernacle, prieſts' garments, ark, &c.

In *Leviticus* we have a collection of ceremonial laws, with all their particularities, and an account of the deaths of *Nadab* and *Abihu*.

The book of *Numbers* contains the firſt and ſecond numberings of the ſeveral tribes with their genealogies, the peculiar offices of the three ſeveral families of the *Levites*, many ceremonial laws, the journeyings and encampments of the people in the wilderneſs during forty years, with the relation of ſome remarkable events which happened in this period; as the ſearching of the land, the rebellion of *Korah*, the victories over *Arad*, *Sihon*, and *Og*, with the diviſion of the kingdoms of the two laſt among the *Gadites*, *Reubenites*, and *Manaſſites*, the hiſtory of *Balak* and *Balaam*, and the victory over the *Midianites*, all deſcribed with the ſeveral particularities of time, place, and perſons.

The book of *Deuteronomy* contains a recapitulation of many things contained in the three laſt books, with a ſecond delivery of the law, chiefly the moral one, by *Moſes*, upon the borders of *Canaan*, juſt before his death, with an account of this.

In the book of *Joſhua*, we have the paſſage over *Jordan*, the conqueſt of the land of *Canaan* in detail, and the diviſion of it among the tribes, including a minute geographical deſcription.

The book of *Judges* recites a great variety of public tranſactions, with the private origin of ſome. In all, the names of times, places, and perſons, both among the *Iſraelites*, and the neighbouring nations, are noted with particularity and ſimplicity.

In the book of *Ruth* is a very particular account of the genealogy of *David*, with ſeveral incidental circumſtances.

The books of *Samuel*, *Kings*, *Chronicles*, *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah*, contain the tranſactions of the kings before the captivity, and governors afterwards, all delivered in the ſame circumſtantial manner. And

here

here the particular account of the regulations ſacred and civil eſtabliſhed by *David*, and of the building of the temple by *Solomon*, the genealogies given in the beginning of the firſt book of *Chronicles*, and the liſts of the perſons who returned, ſealed, &c. after the captivity, in the books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, deſerve eſpecial notice, in the light in which we are now conſidering things.

The book of *Eſther* contains a like account of a very remarkable event, with the inſtitution of a feſtival in memory of it.

The book of *Pſalms* mentions many hiſtorical facts in an incidental way; and this, with the books of *Job*, *Proverbs*, *Eccleſiaſtes*, and *Canticles*, allude to the manners and cuſtoms of ancient times in various ways.

In the *Prophecies* there are ſome hiſtorical relations; and in the other parts the indirect mention of facts, times, places, and perſons, is interwoven with the predictions in the moſt copious and circumſtantial manner.

If we come to the New Teſtament, the ſame obſervations preſent themſelves at firſt view. We have the names of friends and enemies, *Jews*, *Greeks*, and *Romans*, obſcure and illuſtrious, the times, places, and circumſtances of facts ſpecified directly, and alluded to indirectly, with various references to the cuſtoms and manners of thoſe times.

Now here I obſerve, Firſt, That, in fact, we do not ever find, that forged or falſe accounts of things ſuperabound thus in particularities. There is always ſome truth where there are conſiderable particularities related, and they always ſeem to bear ſome proportion to one another. Thus there is a great want of the particulars of time, place, and perſons, in *Manetho*'s account of the *Egytian* dynaſties, *Cteſias*'s of the *Aſſyrian* kings, and thoſe which the technical chronologers have given of the ancient kingdoms of

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Greece; and, agreeably thereto, theſe accounts have much fiction and falſehood, with ſome truth: whereas *Thucydides*'s hiſtory of the *Peloponneſian* war, and *Cæſar*'s of the war in *Gaul*, in both which the particulars of time, place, and perſons, are mentioned, are univerſally eſteemed true to a great degree of exactneſs.

Secondly, A forger, or a relater of falſehoods, would be careful not to mention ſo great a number of particulars, ſince this would be to put into his reader's hands criterions whereby to detect him. Thus we may ſee one reaſon of the fact mentioned in the laſt paragraph, and which in confirming that fact confirms the propoſition here to be proved.

Thirdly, A forger, or a relater of falſehoods, could ſcarce furniſh out ſuch liſts of particulars. It is eaſy to conceive how faithful records kept from time to time by perſons concerned in the tranſactions ſhould contain ſuch liſts; nay, it is natural to expect them in this caſe, from that local memory which takes ſtrong poſſeſſion of the fancy in thoſe who have been preſent at tranſactions; but it would be a work of the higheſt invention, and greateſt ſtretch of genius to raiſe from nothing ſuch numberleſs particularities, as are almoſt every where to be met with in the ſcriptures. The account given of memory, imagination, and invention, in the foregoing part of theſe obſervations, ſets this matter in a ſtrong light.

There is a circumſtance relating to the goſpels, which deſerves particular notice in this place. St. *Matthew* and St. *John* were apoſtles; and therefore, ſince they accompanied Chriſt, muſt have this local memory of his journeyings and miracles. St. *Mark* was a *Jew* of *Judæa*, and a friend of St. *Peter*'s; and therefore may either have had this local memory himſelf, or have written chiefly from St. *Peter*, who had. But St. *Luke*, being a proſelyte of *Antioch*, not converted perhaps till ſeveral years after Chriſt's reſurrection,

tion, and receiving his accounts from different eye-witneſſes, as he ſays himſelf, could have no regard to that order of time, which a local memory would ſuggeſt. Let us ſee how the goſpels anſwer to theſe poſitions. St. *Matthew*'s then appears to be in exact order of time, and to be a regulator to St. *Mark*'s, and St. *Luke*'s, ſhewing St. *Mark*'s to be nearly ſo, but St. *Luke*'s to have little or no regard to the order of time in his account of Chriſt's miniſtry. St. *John*'s goſpel is, like St. *Matthew*'s, in order of time; but as he wrote after all the reſt, and with a view only of recording ſome remarkable particulars, ſuch as Chriſt's actions before he left *Judæa* to go to preach in *Galilee*, his diſputes with the *Jews* of *Jeruſalem*, and his diſcourſes to the apoſtles at his laſt ſupper, there was leſs opportunity for his local memory to ſhew itſelf. However, his recording what paſt before Chriſt's going into *Galilee* might be in part from this cauſe, as St. *Matthew*'s omiſſion of it was probably from his want of this local memory. For it appears, that St. *Matthew* reſided in *Galilee*; and that he was not converted till ſome time after Chriſt's coming thither to preach. Now this ſuitableneſs of the four goſpels to their reputed authors, in a circumſtance of ſo ſubtle and recluſe a nature, is quite inconſiſtent with the ſuppoſition of fiction or forgery. This remark is chiefly taken from Sir *Iſaac Newton*'s chapter concerning the times of the birth and paſſion of Chriſt, in his comment on *Daniel*.

Fourthly, If we could ſuppoſe the perſons who forged the books of the Old and New Teſtaments, to have furniſhed their readers with the great variety of particulars above-mentioned, notwithſtanding the two reaſons here alleged againſt it, we cannot however, conceive, but that the perſons of thoſe times when the books were publiſhed, muſt by the help of theſe criterions have detected and expoſed the for-

geries or falſehoods. For theſe criterions are ſo atteſted by allowed facts, as at this time, and in this remote corner of the world, to eſtabliſh the truth and genuineneſs of the ſcriptures, as may appear even from this chapter, and much more from the writings of commentators, ſacred critics, and ſuch other learned men, as have given the hiſtorical evidences for revealed religion in detail; and by parity of reaſon they would ſuffice even now to detect the fraud, were there any: whence we may conclude, *a fortiori*, that they muſt have enabled the perſons who were upon the ſpot, when the books were publiſhed, to do this; and the importance of many of theſe particulars conſidered under *Prop.* 21. would furniſh them with abundant motives for this purpoſe. And upon the whole I infer, that the very great number of particulars of time, place, perſons, &c. mentioned in the ſcriptures, is a proof of their genuineneſs and truth, even previouſly to the conſideration of the agreement of theſe particulars with hiſtory, natural and civil, and with one another, of which I now proceed to treat.

PROP. XXIV.

The Agreement of the Scriptures with Hiſtory, natural and civil, is a Proof of their Genuineneſs and Truth.

THUS the hiſtory of the fall agrees in an eminent manner, both with the obvious facts of labour, ſorrow, pain, and death, with what we ſee and feel every day, and with all our philoſophical inquiries into the frame of the human mind, the nature of ſocial life, and the origin of evil, as may appear from theſe papers amongſt other writings of the ſame kind. The ſeveral powers of the little world within a man's own breaſt are at variance with one another, as well as thoſe of the great world; we are utterly unable

unable to give a complete ſolution of the origin of the evils which flow from theſe diſcords, and from the jarring of the elements of the natural world; and yet there are comfortable hopes, that all evil will be overpowered and annihilated at laſt, and that it has an entire ſubſerviency to good really and ultimately; *i. e.* though the *ſerpent bruiſe our heel*, yet we ſhall *bruiſe its head.*

It cannot be denied indeed, but that both the hiſtory of the creation, and that of the fall, are attended with great difficulties. But then they are not of ſuch a kind as intimate them to be a fiction contrived by *Moſes.* It is probable, that he ſet down the traditional account, ſuch as he received it from his anceſtors; and that this account contains the literal truth in ſhort, though ſo concealed in certain particulars through its ſhortneſs, and ſome figurative expreſſions made uſe of, that we cannot yet, perhaps never ſhall, interpret it ſatisfactorily. However, Mr. *Whiſton*'s conjectures concerning the ſix days creation ſeem to deſerve the attention of future inquirers; and there is great plauſibility in ſuppoſing with him, that the firſt chapter of *Geneſis* contains a narrative of the ſucceſſion of viſible appearances.

One may ſuppoſe alſo, that there is a typical and prophetic ſenſe to be diſcovered hereafter, relative perhaps to the ſix millenniums, which are to precede a ſeventh ſabbatical one; and that the words are more accommodated to this ſenſe than to the literal one, in ſome places, which I think holds in many of the prophecies that have double ſenſes. However, there is no appearance of any motive to a fraud, either in the hiſtory of the creation or fall, nor any mark of one. And the ſame ſhortneſs and obſcurity which prevents our being able to explain, ſeems alſo to preclude objections. If we ſuppoſe theſe hiſtories to have been delivered by traditional explanations that accompanied hieroglyphical delineations, this would perhaps account

count for ſome of the difficulties; and help us to conceive how the hiſtories may be exact, and even decypherable hereafter. The appellations of the tree of life, of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and of the ſerpent, ſeem to favour this ſuppoſition. At the utmoſt, one can make no objections againſt theſe hiſtories, but what are conſiſtent with the firſt and loweſt of the ſuppoſitions above-mentioned concerning divine inſpiration.

Natural hiſtory bears a ſtrong teſtimony to *Moſes*'s account of the deluge; and ſhews that it muſt have been univerſal, or nearly ſo, however difficult it may be to us, either to find ſources for ſo great a body of waters, or methods of removing them. That a comet had ſome ſhare in this event, ſeems highly probable from what Dr. *Halley* and Mr. *Whiſton* have obſerved of this matter: I gueſs alſo partly from the ſuppoſition, that ſome part of the tail of a comet was then attracted by the earth, and depoſited there, partly from the great ſhortening of human life after the flood, and partly from the fermenting and inebriating quality of vegetable juices, which ſeems firſt to have appeared immediately after the flood, that a great change was made at the time of the flood in the conſtitution of natural bodies, and particularly in that of water. And it ſeems not improbable to me, that an enlargement of the reſpective ſpheres of attraction and repulſion, and of the force of theſe, in the ſmall particles of water, might greatly contribute to account for ſome circumſtances of the deluge, mentioned by *Moſes*. For, by the increaſe of the ſphere, and force of attraction, the waters ſuſpended in the air or firmament in the form of a miſt or vapour before the flood, ſee *Gen.* ii. 5, 6. might be collected into large drops, and fall upon the earth. And their fall might give occaſion to rarer watery vapours, floating at great diſtances from the earth in the planetary and intermundane ſpaces, to approach it, be in like

like manner condenſed into large drops, and fall upon it. This might continue for forty days, the force with which the rare vapours approached the earth decreaſing all the latter part of that time, and being at the end of it overpowered by the contrary force of the vapours raiſed from the earth, now covered with water, by the action of the ſun, and of the wind, mentioned *Gen.* viii. 1. For it is evident, that the wind has great power in raiſing watery particles, *i. e.* putting them into a ſtate of repulſion; and the wind here conſidered would be far ſtronger than that which now prevails in the *pacific ocean*, ſince the whole globe was one great ocean during the height of the deluge. The ceſſation of the rain, and the increaſe of the ſphere, and force of repulſion, above ſuppoſed, would in like manner favour the aſcent of vapours from this great ocean. And thus the precedent vapours might be driven by the ſubſequent ones into the planetary and intermundane ſpaces, beyond the earth's attraction. However, ſince the quantity of the ſubſequent vapours muſt perpetually decreaſe by the decreaſe of the ſurface of the ocean, a limit would be ſet to the aſcent of the vapours, as was before to their deſcent.

According to this hypotheſis, that ſtate of our waters, which was ſuperinduced at the deluge, may both be the cauſe of the rainbow, *i. e.* of drops of a ſize proper for this purpoſe, and exempt us from the danger of a ſecond deluge. For a freſh intermixture of like cometical particles could not now ſuperinduce a new ſtate. The rainbow may therefore be a natural ſign and evidence, *that the waters ſhall no more become a flood to deſtroy the earth.*

As to the breaking up the fountains of the great deep, mentioned *Gen.* vii. 11. though no ſatisfactory account has been given of this hitherto, yet ſurely there is great plauſibility in ſuppoſing, that the increaſed attraction of a comet, conſequent upon its near approach

approach to the earth, might have ſome ſuch effect, and at the ſame time contribute to produce ſuch changes in the earth, as a mere deluge could not.

Civil hiſtory affords likewiſe many evidences, which ſupport the *Moſaic* account of the deluge. Thus, firſt, we find from pagan authors, that the tradition of a flood was general, or even univerſal. Secondly, The paucity of mankind, and the vaſt tracts of uninhabited land, which are mentioned in the accounts of the firſt ages, ſhew that mankind are lately ſprung from a ſmall ſtock, and even ſuit the time aſſigned by *Moſes* for the flood. Thirdly, The great number of ſmall kingdoms, and petty ſtates, in the firſt ages, and the late riſe of the great empires of *Egypt*, *Aſſyria*, *Babylon*, &c. concur to the ſame purpoſe. Fourthly, The invention and progreſs of arts and ſciences concur likewiſe. And this laſt favours the *Moſaic* hiſtory of the antediluvians. For as he mentions little of their arts, ſo it appears from the late invention of them after the flood, that thoſe who were preſerved from it were poſſeſſed of few.

It has been objected to the *Moſaic* hiſtory of the deluge, that the ark could not contain all the animals which are now found upon the earth with the proper proviſions for them during the time of the deluge. But this, upon an accurate computation, has been proved to be otherwiſe; ſo that what was thought an objection, is even ſome evidence. For it is extremely improbable, that a perſon who had feigned the particular of the ark, ſhould have come ſo near the proper dimenſions. It is to be conſidered here, that the ſeveral ſpecieſes of both plants, and brute animals, which differ from each other by ſmall degrees, ſeem to be multiplied every day, by the varieties of climates, culture, diet, mixture, &c. alſo, that if we ſuppoſe an univerſal deluge, the ark, with the entrance of the animals, &c. ſeem neceſſary alſo. For as we can trace up the firſt imperfect

perfect rudiments of the art of ſhipping amongſt the *Greeks*, there could be no ſhipping before the flood; conſequently no animals could be ſaved. Nay, it is highly improbable, that even men, and domeſtic animals, could be ſaved, not to mention wild beaſts, ſerpents, &c. though we ſhould ſuppoſe, that the antediluvians had ſhipping, unleſs we ſuppoſe alſo, that they had a divine intimation and directions about it, ſuch as *Moſes* relates; which would be to give up the cauſe of infidelity at once.

It has been objected likewiſe, that the *Negro* nations differ ſo much from the *Europeans*, that they do not ſeem to have deſcended from the ſame anceſtors. But this objection has no ſolid foundation. We cannot preſume to ſay what alterations climate, air, water, ſoil, cuſtoms, &c. can or cannot produce. It is no ways to be imagined, that all the national differences in complexion, features, make of the bones, &c. require ſo many different originals; on the contrary, we have reaſon from experience to aſſert, that various changes of this kind are made by the incidents of life, juſt as was obſerved, in the laſt paragraph, of plants, and brute animals. And, with reſpect to the different complexions of different nations, Dr. *Mitchell* has ſhewn with great appearance of truth, *Phil. Tranſ. Numb.* 474. that theſe ariſe from external influences. It will confirm this, if it be found, that the *Jews*, by reſiding in any country for ſome generations, approach to the complexion of the original natives. At the ſame time we muſt obſerve from the hiſtory of diſtempers, that acquired diſpoſitions may be tranſmitted to the deſcendants for ſome generations; which is perhaps one of the great truths intimated in the account of the fall. And thus the children of *Negroes* may be black, though born and bred up in a country where the original natives are not ſo.

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A third objection is, that it is difficult to account for the original of the *Americans*, and for the wild beaſts and ſerpents that are found in that quarter of the world, according to the *Moſaic* hiſtory. But to this one may anſwer, firſt, that *America* may be even now contiguous to the north-eaſt part of *Aſia*. Secondly, That it might have been contiguous to other parts of our great continent for ſome centuries after the deluge, though that contiguity be ſince broken off. Thirdly, That the firſt ſailors, who ventured out of the ſtraits, or others, might be driven, by ſtreſs of weather, and their own ignorance, firſt within the influence of the trade-winds, and then to ſome part of *America*. One can offer nothing certain on either ſide, in reſpect of theſe points. However, it ſeems to me, that many cuſtoms found amongſt the *Negroes* and *Americans* are ſtronger evidences, that they are of the ſame original with the *Aſiatics* and *Europeans*, than any which have yet appeared to the contrary. And, upon the whole, I conclude certainly, that the *Moſaic* account of the deluge is much confirmed by both natural and civil hiſtory, if we embrace the firſt and loweſt hypotheſis concerning divine inſpiration; and has very ſtrong preſumptions for it, according to the ſecond or third.

If we could ſuppoſe the high mountains in *South-America* not to have been immerged in the deluge, we might the more eaſily account for the wild beaſts, poiſonous ſerpents, and curious birds of *America*. Might not the ark be driven round the globe during the deluge? And might not *Noah* be aware of this, and obſerve that it had been immerged fifteen cubits in water? And may not the *Moſaic* account be partly a narrative of what *Noah* ſaw, partly the concluſions which he muſt naturally draw from thence? Thus the tops of ſome of the higheſt mountains might eſcape, conſiſtently with the *Moſaic* account. The future inquiries of natural hiſtorians may perhaps determine this point. The

The next great event recorded in *Geneſis* is the confuſion of languages. Now the *Moſaic* account of this appears highly probable, if we firſt allow that of the deluge. For it ſeems impoſſible to explain how the known languages ſhould ariſe from one ſtock. Let any one try only in *Hebrew*, *Greek*, *Latin*, and *Engliſh*. The changes which have happened in languages ſince hiſtory has been certain, do not at all correſpond to a ſuppoſition of this kind. There is too much of method and art in the *Greek* and *Latin* tongues for them to have been the inventions of a rude and barbarous people; and they differ too much from *Hebrew*, *Arabic*, &c. to have flowed from them without deſign. As to the *Chineſe*, it is difficult to make any probable conjectures about it, partly from its great heterogeneity in reſpect of other languages, partly becauſe learned men have not yet examined it accurately. However, the moſt probable conjecture ſeems to be, that it is the language of *Noah*'s poſt-diluvian poſterity; the leaſt probable one, that it could have flowed naturally from any known language, or from the ſame ſtock with any; which it muſt have done, if we admit the deluge, and yet reject the confuſion of languages.

The diſperſion of the three ſons of *Noah* into different countries, related in the tenth chapter of *Geneſis*, comes next under conſideration, being a conſequence, not the cauſe, of the diverſity of languages. Now here antiquarians and learned men, ſeem to be fully agreed, that the *Moſaic* account is confirmed as much as can be expected in our preſent ignorance of the ſtate of ancient nations. And it is to be obſerved of all the articles treated of under this propoſition, that we, who live in the North-weſt corner of *Europe*, lie under great diſadvantages in ſuch reſearches. However, ſince thoſe who have ſtudied the oriental languages and hiſtories, or have travelled into the eaſtern parts, have made many diſcoveries

diſcoveries of late years, which have ſurprizingly confirmed the ſcripture accounts, one may hope and preſume, that if either our learned men be hereafter ſuffered to have free acceſs to thoſe parts, or the natives themſelves become learned, both which are ſurely probable in the higheſt degree, numberleſs unexpected evidences for the truth of the ſcripture hiſtory will be brought to light.

Let us next come to the ſtate of religion in the ancient poſtdiluvian world, according to *Moſes*, and the ſucceeding ſacred hiſtorians. The poſtdiluvian patriarchs then appear to have worſhipped the one Supreme Being by ſacrifices, but in a ſimple manner, and to have had frequent divine communications. By degrees their poſterity fell off to idolatry, worſhipped the ſun, moon, and ſtars, deified dead men, and polluted themſelves with the moſt impure and abominable inſtitutions. The *Iſraelites* alone were kept to the worſhip of the true God, and even they were often infected by their idolatrous neighbours. Now all this is perfectly agreeable to what we find in pagan hiſtory. The idolatries of the pagans are acknowledged on all hands. It appears alſo from pagan hiſtory, that they grew up by degrees, as the ſcriptures intimate. All the pagan religions appear to have had the worſhip of one god ſuperior to the reſt, as their common foundation. They all endeavoured to render him propitious by ſacrifice; which ſurely cannot be an human invention, nor a cuſtom, which, if invented in one nation, would be readily propagated to another. They all joined mediatorial and inferior, alſo local and tutelar deities to the one god. And they all taught the frequency of divine communications. Hence the pagan religions appear to be merely the degenerated offſpring of patriarchal revelations, and to infer them as their cauſe. Hence the pretences of kings, lawgivers, prieſts, and great men, to inſpiration, with the credulity of the multitude.

titude. That there had been divine communications, was beyond diſpute; and therefore all that reluctance to admit them, which appears in the preſent age, was over-ruled. At firſt there were no impoſtors. When therefore they did ariſe, it would not be eaſy for the multitude to diſtinguiſh between thoſe who had really divine communications, and thoſe who only pretended to them; till at laſt all real inſpiration having ceaſed amongſt the gentile world, their ſeveral religions kept poſſeſſion merely by the force of education, fraud in the prieſts, and fear in the people; and even theſe ſupports began to fail at laſt, about the time of Chriſt's coming. And thus many things, which have been thought to weaken the evidences for the ſcripture accounts, are found to ſtrengthen them, by flowing naturally from that ſtate of religion in ancient times, and from that only, which the ſcripture delivers.

A farther confirmation of the ſame ſcripture accounts of the flood, diſperſion of mankind, and patriarchal revelations, may be had from the following very remarkable particular: it appears from hiſtory, that the different nations of the world have had, *cæteris paribus*, more or leſs knowledge, civil and religious, in proportion as they were nearer to, or had more intimate communication with, *Egypt*, *Palæſtine*, *Chaldæa*, and the other countries, that were inhabited by the moſt eminent perſons amongſt the firſt deſcendents of *Noah*, and by thoſe who are ſaid in ſcripture to have had particular revelations made to them by God; and that the firſt inhabitants of the extreme parts of the world, reckoning *Palæſtine* as the centre, were in general mere ſavages. Now all this is utterly inexplicable upon the footing of infidelity, of the excluſion of all divine communications. Why ſhould not human nature be as ſagacious, and make as many diſcoveries, civil and religious, at the Cape of *Good Hope*, or in *America*, as in *Egypt*, *Palæſtine*, *Meſopotamia*, *Greece*, or *Rome?* Nay, why ſhould *Palæſtine*

ſo far exceed them all, as it did confeſſedly? Allow the ſcripture accounts, and all will be clear and eaſy. Mankind, after the flood, were firſt diſperſed from the plains of *Meſopotamia*. Some of the chief heads of families ſettled there, in *Palæſtine*, and in *Egypt*. *Palæſtine* had afterwards extraordinary divine illuminations beſtowed upon its inhabitants, the *Iſraelites* and *Jews*. Hence its inhabitants had the pureſt notions of God, and the wiſeſt civil eſtabliſhment. Next after them come the *Egyptians* and *Chaldæans*, who, not being removed from their firſt habitations, and living in fertile countries watered by the *Nile*, *Tigris*, and *Euphrates*, may be ſuppoſed to have preſerved more both of the antediluvian and poſtdiluvian revelations, alſo to have had more leiſure for invention, and a more free communication with the *Iſraelites* and *Jews*, than any other nations: whereas thoſe ſmall parties, which were driven farther and farther from each other into the extremes of heat and cold, entirely occupied in providing neceſſaries for themſelves, and alſo cut off by rivers, mountains, or diſtance, from all communication with *Palæſtine*, *Egypt*, and *Chaldæa*, would loſe much of their original ſtock, and have neither inclination nor ability to invent more.

Let us now conſider the hiſtory of particular facts, and inquire what atteſtations we can produce from pagan hiſtory for the ſcripture accounts of *Abraham* and his poſterity the *Iſraelites* and *Jews*. We cannot expect much here, partly becauſe theſe things are of a private nature, if compared to the univerſal deluge, partly becauſe the pagan hiſtory is either deficient, or groſsly corrupted with fable and fiction, till we come to the times of the declenſion of the kingdoms of *Iſrael* and *Judah*. However, ſome faint traces there are in ancient times, and many concurring circumſtances in ſucceeding ones; and, as ſoon as the pagan records come to be clear and certain,

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we have numerous and ſtrong confirmations of the ſacred hiſtory. Thus the hiſtory of *Abraham* ſeems to have tranſpired in ſome meaſure. It is alſo probable, that the ancient *Brachmans* were of his poſterity by *Keturah*, that they derived their name from him, and worſhipped the true God only. *Moſes* is mentioned by many heathen writers, and the accounts which they give of his conducting the *Iſraelites* from *Egypt* to *Canaan* are ſuch as might be expected. The authors lived ſo long after *Moſes*, and had ſo little opportunity or inclination to know the exact truth, or to be particular, that their accounts cannot invalidate the ſcripture hiſtory, though they do a little confirm it. The expulſion of the *Canaanites* by *Joſhua* ſeems to have laid the foundation of the kingdom of the *ſhepherds* in the *Lower Egypt* mentioned by *Manetho*, and of the expulſion of the natives into the *Upper Egypt*; who, after ſome centuries, drove the *ſhepherds* back again into *Canaan* about the time of *Saul*. The *Canaanites* mentioned by St. *Auſtin* and others, upon the coaſt of *Afric*, may be of the ſame original. *See Newton's Chronol. page* 198. We may conclude from the book of *Judges*, that there were many petty ſovereignties in the neighbourhood of *Canaan*; and it appears from pagan hiſtory, as Sir *Iſaac Newton* has rectified it, that the firſt great empire, that of *Egypt*, was not yet riſen. When *David* ſubdued the *Philiſtines* or *Phœnicians*, *Cadmus* and others ſeem to have fled into *Greece*, and to have carried letters with them, which the *Philiſtines* had probably learnt, about a generation before, from the copy of the law found in the ark taken from the *Iſraelites*. After *Solomon*'s temple was built, the temple of *Vulcan* in *Egypt*, and others in other places, began to be built in imitation of it; juſt as the oracles of the heathens were imitations of God's communications to the *Iſraelites*, and particularly of that by *Urim* and *Thummim*. *Shiſhak*, who came out of *Egypt* in the fifth year

of *Rehoboam*, is the *Seſoſtris* of *Herodotus*; and this point, being ſettled, becomes a capital pin, upon which all the pagan chronology depends. Hence *Herodotus*'s liſt of the *Egyptian* kings is made probable and conſiſtent. As we advance farther to the *Aſſyrian* monarchy, the ſcripture accounts agree with the profane ones rectified; and when we come ſtill farther to the *æra* of *Nabonaſſar*, and to the kings of *Babylon* and *Perſia*, which are poſterior to this *æra*, and recorded in *Ptolemy*'s canon, we find the agreement of ſacred and profane hiſtory much more exact, there being certain criterions in the profane hiſtory for fixing the facts related in it. And it is remarkable, that not only the direct relations of the hiſtorical books, but the indirect incidental mention of things in the prophecies, tallies with true chronology; which ſurely is ſuch an evidence for their genuineneſs and truth, as cannot be called in queſtion. And, upon the whole, it may be obſerved, that the ſacred hiſtory is diſtinct, methodical and conſiſtent throughout; the profane utterly deficient in the firſt ages, obſcure, and full of fictions, in the ſucceeding ones; and that it is but juſt clear and preciſe in the principal facts about the time that the ſacred hiſtory ends. So that this corrects and regulates that, and renders it intelligible in many inſtances, which muſt otherwiſe be given up as utterly inexplicable. How then can we ſuppoſe the ſacred hiſtory not to be genuine and true, or a wicked impoſture to riſe up, and continue not only undiſcovered, but even to increaſe to a moſt audacious height, in a nation which of all others kept the moſt exact accounts of time? I will add one remark more: this ſame nation, who may not have loſt ſo much as one year from the creation of the world to the *Babyloniſh* captivity, as ſoon as they were deprived of the aſſiſtance of prophets, became moſt inaccurate in their methods of keeping time, there being nothing more

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erroneous than the accounts of *Joſephus*, and the modern *Jews*, from the time of *Cyrus*, to that of *Alexander the Great*; notwithſtanding that all the requiſite aſſiſtances might eaſily have been borrowed from the neighbouring nations, who now kept regular annals. Hence it appears, that the exactneſs of the ſacred hiſtory was owing to the divine aſſiſtance.

It is an evidence in favour of the ſcriptures, allied to thoſe which I am here conſidering, that the manners of the perſons mentioned in the ſcriptures have that ſimplicity and plainneſs, which is alſo aſcribed to the firſt ages of the world by pagan writers; and both of them concur, by this, to intimate the novelty of the then preſent race, *i. e.* the deluge.

Beſides theſe atteſtations from profane hiſtory, we may conſider the *Jews* themſelves as bearing teſtimony to this day, in all countries of the world, to the truth of their ancient hiſtory, *i. e.* to that of the Old and New Teſtaments. Allow this, and it will be eaſy to ſee how they ſhould ſtill perſiſt in their attachment to that religion, thoſe laws, and thoſe prophecies, which ſo manifeſtly condemn them, both in paſt times, and in the preſent. Suppoſe any conſiderable alteration made in their ancient hiſtory, *i. e.* any ſuch as may anſwer the purpoſes of infidelity, and their preſent ſtate will be inexplicable.

The books of the New Teſtament are verified by hiſtory, in a manner ſtill more illuſtrious; theſe books being written, and the facts mentioned therein tranſacted, during the times of *Auguſtus*, *Tiberius*, and the ſucceeding *Cæſars*. Here we may obſerve,

Firſt, That the incidental mention of the *Roman* emperors, governors of *Judæa*, and the neighbouring provinces, the *Jewiſh* high prieſts, ſects of the *Jews*, and their cuſtoms, of places, and of tranſactions, is found to be perfectly agreeable to the hiſtories of thoſe times. And as the whole number of

theſe particulars is very great, they may be reckoned a full proof of the genuineneſs of the books of the New Teſtament; it being impoſſible for a perſon who had forged them, *i. e.* who was not an eye and ear witneſs, and otherwiſe concerned with the tranſactions as the books require, but who had invented many hiſtories and circumſtances, &c. not to have been deficient, ſuperfluous, and erroneous. No man's memory or knowledge is ſufficient for ſuch an adaptation of feigned circumſtances, and eſpecially where the mention is incidental. Let any one conſider how often the beſt poets fail in this, who yet endeavour not to vary from the manners and cuſtoms of the age of which they write; at the ſame time that poetry neither requires nor admits ſo great a minuteneſs in the particular circumſtances of time, place, and perſons, as the writers of the New Teſtament have deſcended to naturally and incidentally.

Secondly, That Chriſt preached in *Judæa* and *Galilee*, made many diſciples, and was crucified under *Pontius Pilate*, at the inſtigation of the chief men among the *Jews*; alſo that his diſciples preached after his death, not only in *Judæa*, but all over the *Roman* empire; that they converted multitudes, were perſecuted, and at laſt ſuffered death for their firm adherence to their maſter; and that both *Chriſt* and his diſciples pretended to work many miracles; are facts atteſted by civil hiſtory in the ampleſt manner, and which cannot be called in queſtion. Now theſe facts are ſo connected with the other facts mentioned in the New Teſtament, that they muſt ſtand or fall together. There is no probable account to be given of theſe facts, but by allowing the reſt. For the proof of this, I appeal to every reader who will make the trial. It may alſo be concluded from the remarkable unwillingneſs of the preſent unbelievers to allow even the plaineſt facts in expreſs terms. For it ſhews them to be apprehenſive, that the connection between the

the ſeveral principal facts mentioned in the New Teſtament is inſeparable, and that the atteſtation given to ſome by civil hiſtory may eaſily be extended to all.

It has been objected, that more mention ought to have been made of the common facts by the profane writers of thoſe times, alſo ſome acknowledgment of the miraculous ones, had they been true. To this we may anſwer, Firſt, That *Judæa* was but a ſmall and diſtant province of the *Roman* empire, and the *Jews* themſelves, with whom the Chriſtians were for a long time confounded, much deſpiſed by the *Romans*. Secondly, That hiſtorians, politicians, generals, &c. have their imaginations ſo much preoccupied by affairs of ſtate, that matters purely religious are little regarded by them. *Gallio cared for none of theſe things.* Thirdly, That a perſon who attended in any great degree to the chriſtian affairs, if a good man, could ſcarce avoid becoming a chriſtian; after which his teſtimony ceaſes to be pagan, and becomes chriſtian; of which I ſhall ſpeak under the next head. Fourthly, That both thoſe who were favourers of the chriſtians, and thoſe averſe to them in a moderate degree, one of which muſt be the caſe with great numbers, would have motives to be ſilent; the half chriſtians would be ſilent for fear of being perſecuted; and the others would affect to take no notice of what they diſliked, but could not diſprove; which is a fact that occurs to daily obſervation. Laſtly, When theſe things are laid together, the atteſtations of the profane writers to the common facts appear to be ſuch as one might expect, and their ſilence as to the miraculous ones is accounted for.

Thirdly, All the chriſtian writers, from the time of the apoſtles and downwards, bear teſtimony to the genuineneſs of the books of the New Teſtament, and the truth of the facts, in a great variety of ways, direct and indirect, and in ſuch manner as might be

expected. Their quotations from them are numberleſs, and agree ſufficiently with the preſent copies. They go every where upon the ſuppoſition of the facts, as the foundation of all their diſcourſes, writings, hopes, fears, &c. They diſcover every where the higheſt regard, and even veneration, both for the books and the authors. In ſhort, one cannot ſee how this teſtimony in favour of the books of the New Teſtament can be invalidated, unleſs by ſuppoſing all the eccleſiaſtical writing of the firſt centuries to be forged alſo; or all the writers to have concurred to write as if they believed the genuineneſs and truth of theſe books, though they did not; or to have had no ability or inclination to diſtinguiſh genuineneſs and truth from forgery and falſehood; or by ſome other ſuch ſuppoſition, as will ſcarce bear to be named.

Here three queſtions may be aſked, that bear ſome relation to this ſubject; and the anſwers to which will, I think, illuſtrate and confirm what has been advanced in the laſt paragraph.

Thus, Firſt, It may be aſked, why we have not more accounts of the life of Chriſt tranſmitted to us. To this I anſwer, that it is probable from St. *Luke*'s preface, that there were many ſhort and imperfect accounts handed about very early; the authors of which, though they had not taken care to inform themſelves accurately, did not, however, endeavour to impoſe on others deſignedly; and that all theſe grew into diſuſe, of courſe, after the four goſpels, or perhaps the three firſt, were publiſhed, or, at leaſt, after the canon of the New Teſtament was formed; alſo that after this the chriſtians were ſo perfectly ſatisfied, and had the four goſpels in ſuch eſteem, that no one preſumed to add any other accounts, and eſpecially as all the apoſtles were then dead.

The Second Queſtion is, how come we to have ſo little account in the primitive writers, of the lives, labours, and ſufferings of the apoſtles? I anſwer, that

that the apoſtles ſeem to have reſided in *Judæa*, till *Nero*'s army invaded it, and afterwards to have travelled into diſtant parts; and that neither their converts in *Judæa*, nor thoſe in the diſtant barbarous countries, into which they travelled, could have any probable motive for writing their lives: alſo, that, as to other chriſtians, they had neither opportunities nor motives. The chriſtians looked up to Chriſt, as their maſter, not to the apoſtles. Their great buſineſs was to promote chriſtianity, not to gratify their own or other's fruitleſs curioſity. They were not learned men, who had ſpent their lives in the ſtudy of annaliſts and biographers. They did not ſuſpect that an account of the lives of the apoſtles would ever be wanted, or that any one could call their integrity, inſpiration, miracles, &c. in queſtion. St. *Luke* ſeems to have deſigned by his *Acts*, chiefly to ſhew how the goſpel firſt got firm footing amongſt *Jews*, proſelytes of the gate, and idolatrous gentiles; in order to encourage the new converts to copy the examples of the apoſtles, and firſt preachers, and to publiſh the goſpel in all nations. Laſtly, The primitive chriſtians had early diſputes with *Jews*, heathens, heretics, and even with one another; which took up much of their attention and concern.

Thirdly, It may be aſked, who were the perſons that forged the ſpurious acts and revelations of ſeveral of the apoſtles, &c. I anſwer, that, amongſt the number of thoſe who joined themſelves to the chriſtians, there muſt be many whoſe hearts were not truly purified, and who, upon apoſtatizing, would become more ſelf-intereſted, vain-glorious, and impure, than before. Theſe were antichriſts, as St. *John* calls them, who left the church becauſe they were not of it. Some of theſe forged books to ſupport themſelves, and eſtabliſh their own tenets. Others might write partly like enthuſiaſts, partly like impoſtors. And, laſtly, There were ſome both weak and

and wicked men, though not ſo abandoned as the ancient heretics, who in the latter end of the ſecond century, and afterwards, endeavoured to make converts by forgeries, and ſuch other wicked arts. However, all thoſe who are uſually called fathers, in the firſt ages, ſtand remarkably clear of ſuch charges.

Fourthly, The propagation of chriſtianity, with the manner in which it was oppoſed by both *Jews* and Gentiles, bears witneſs to the truth and genuineneſs of the books of the New Teſtament. But I forbear entering upon this argument, as it will come more properly in another place. Let me only obſerve here, that there are many paſſages in the Talmudical writings, which afford both light and confirmation to the New Teſtament, notwithſtanding that one principal deſign of the authors was to diſcredit it.

PROP. XXV.

The Agreement of the Books of the Old and New Teſtaments with themſelves, and with each other, is an Argument both of their Genuineneſs and Truth.

THE truth of this propoſition will be evident, if a ſufficient number of theſe mutual agreements can be made out. It is never found, that any ſingle perſon, who deviates much from the truth, can be ſo perfectly upon his guard as to be always conſiſtent with himſelf. Much leſs therefore can this happen in the caſe of a number, living alſo in different ages. Nothing can make them conſiſtent, but their copying faithfully after real facts. The inſtances will make this clearer.

The laws of the *Iſraelites* are contained in the Pentateuch, and referred to in a great variety of ways, direct and indirect, in the hiſtorical books, in the Pſalms, and in the Prophecies. The hiſtorical facts

facts alſo in the preceding books are often referred to in thoſe that ſucceed, and in the Pſalms and Prophecies. In like manner the goſpels have the greateſt harmony with each other, and the Epiſtles of St. *Paul* with the *Acts of the Apoſtles*. And indeed one may ſay, that there is ſcarce any book of either Old or New Teſtament, which may not be ſhewn to refer to many of the reſt in ſome way or other. For it is to be obſerved, that the Bible has been ſtudied and commented upon far more than any other book whatſoever; and that it has been the buſineſs of believers in all ages to find out the mutual relations of its parts, and of unbelievers to ſearch for inconſiſtencies; alſo that the firſt meet every day with more and more evidences in favour of the ſcriptures from the mutual agreements and coincidences here conſidered; and that unbelievers have never been able to allege any inconſiſtencies that could in the leaſt invalidate the truth of the principal facts; I think, not even affect the divine inſpiration of the hiſtorical books, according to the ſecond or third hypotheſis abovementioned.

It will probably illuſtrate this propoſition, to bring a parallel inſtance from the *Roman* writers. Suppoſe then that no more remained of theſe writers than *Livy*, *Tully*, and *Horace*. Would they not by their references to the ſame facts and cuſtoms, by the ſameneſs of ſtyle in the ſame writer, and differences in the different ones, and numberleſs other ſuch like circumſtances of critical conſideration, prove themſelves, and one another to be genuine, and the principal facts related, or alluded to, to be true?

It is alſo to be obſerved, that this mutual harmony and ſelf-conſiſtency, in its ultimate ratio, is the whole of the evidence which we have for facts done in ancient times or diſtant places. Thus, if a perſon was ſo ſceptical as to call in queſtion the whole *Roman* hiſtory, even the moſt notorious facts, as their conqueſts

queſts firſt of *Italy*, and then of the neighbouring countries, the death of *Cæſar*, and the fall of the weſtern empire by the invaſions of the *Goths* and *Vandals*, with all the evidences of theſe from books, inſcriptions, coins, cuſtoms, &c. as being all forged in order to deceive; one could only ſhew him, that it is inconſiſtent with what he ſees of human nature, to ſuppoſe that there ſhould be ſuch a combination to deceive; or that the agreement of theſe evidences with each other is far too great to be the effect of any ſuch fraudulent deſign, of chance, &c. And all theſe arguments are, in effect, only bringing a number of concurring evidences, whoſe ſum total ſoon approaches to the ultimate limit, *i. e.* to unity, or abſolute certainty, nearer than by any diſtinguiſhable difference. It does not therefore import, in reſpect of real conviction, after a certain number are brought, whether we bring any more or no; they can only add this imperceptible defect, *i. e.* practically nothing. Thus I ſuppoſe, that the remaining writings of *Livy*, *Tully*, and *Horace* alone would ſatisfy any impartial man ſo much of the general extenſiveneſs of the *Roman* conqueſts, &c. that nothing perceptible could be added to his conviction; no more than any common event can, or ever does in fact, appear more credible from the teſtimony of a thouſand than of ten or twenty witneſſes of approved integrity. And whoever will apply this reaſoning to the preſent caſe, muſt perceive, as it appears to me, that the numberleſs minute, direct, and indirect agreements and coincidences, that preſent themſelves to all diligent readers of the ſcriptures, prove their truth and genuineneſs beyond all contradiction, at leaſt according to the firſt and loweſt hypotheſis concerning divine inſpiration.

As to thoſe few and ſmall apparent inconſiſtencies, which are ſuppoſed to confine the inſpiration of the ſcriptures to this loweſt ſenſe; one may obſerve, that they

they decreaſe every day as learned men inquire farther; and that, were the ſcriptures perfectly exact in every particular, there muſt be ſome apparent difficulties, ariſing merely from our ignorance of ancient languages, cuſtoms, diſtant places, &c. and conſequently that if theſe be not more, than our ignorance makes it reaſonable to expect, they are no objection at all. And of apparent inconſiſtencies one may remark in particular, that they exclude the ſuppoſition of forgery. No ſingle forger, or combination of forgers, would have ſuffered the apparent inconſiſtencies which occur in a few places, ſuch as the different genealogies of Chriſt in St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke*, and ſome little variations in the narration of the ſame fact in different goſpels. Theſe are too obvious at firſt ſight not to have been prevented, had there been any fraud.

I will here add an hypotheſis, by which, as it appears to me, one may reconcile the genealogies of St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke*. I ſuppoſe then, that St. *Matthew* relates the real progenitors of *Joſeph*: St. *Luke* the ſeries of thoſe who were heirs to *David* by birthright; and that both tranſcribed from genealogical tables, well known to the *Jews* of thoſe times. St. *Matthew* after *David* takes *Solomon*, from whom *Joſeph* lineally deſcended. St. *Luke* takes *Nathan*, upon whom, though younger than ſome others, and even than *Solomon*, we muſt ſuppoſe the birthright to be conferred, as in the inſtances of *Jacob* and *Joſeph*. St. *Matthew* proceeds by real deſcent to *Salathiel*, at the time of the captivity; St. *Luke* proceeds by the heirs according to birthright, and comes to *Salathiel* likewiſe. We muſt therefore ſuppoſe, that *Salathiel*, *Solomon*'s heir, was now *David*'s alſo, by the extinction of all the branches of *Nathan*'s family. St. *Matthew* then takes *Zorobabel* as *Joſeph*'s real progenitor, St. *Luke* take him as heir or eldeſt ſon to *Salathiel*. Again, St. *Matthew* takes *Abiud* the real progenitor,

progenitor, St. *Luke Rheſa* the eldeſt ſon; and thus St. *Matthew* proceeds by lineal deſcent to *Joſeph*, St. *Luke* by heirs to the ſame *Joſeph*; for we are to ſuppoſe, that *Heli* dying without heirs male, *Joſeph* become his heir by birthright, *i. e.* heir to *Zorobabel*, *i. e.* to *David*. If we farther ſuppoſe, that the virgin *Mary* was daughter to *Heli*, for which there appears to be ſome evidence, the ſolution will be more complete, and more agreeable to the *Jewiſh* cuſtoms. It confirms this ſolution, that St. *Matthew* uſes the word ἐγέννησε, which reſtrains his genealogy to lineal deſcent; whereas St. *Luke* uſes the article τοῦ, which is very general. It confirms it alſo, that St. *Luke*'s deſcents, reckoning from *David* to *Salathiel*, are but about twenty-two years apiece; which is much too ſhort for deſcents from father to ſon, but agrees very well to deſcents by birthright. As to St. *Matthew*'s deſcents, they are far too long, after the captivity, for deſcents from father to ſon; but then it is eaſy to ſuppoſe, that ſome were left out on account of dying before their fathers, or ſome other reaſon. Three of the kings of *Judah* are left out after *Joram*, perhaps on account of their being of the immediate poſterity of the idolatrous *Ahab*'s daughter *Athaliah*. Others are left out after the captivity, perhaps for ſome ſimilar reaſon.

PROP. XXVI.

The Unity of Deſign, which appears in the Diſpenſations recorded in the Scriptures, is an Argument not only of their Truth and Genuineneſs, but alſo of their Divine Authority.

FOR this unity is not only ſo great as to exclude forgery and fiction, in the ſame way as the mutual agreements mentioned in the laſt propoſition, but alſo

alſo greater than the beſt and ableſt men could have preſerved, in the circumſtances of theſe writers, without the divine aſſiſtance. In order to ſee this, let us inquire what this deſign is, and how it is purſued by the ſeries of events, and divine interpoſitions, recorded in the ſcriptures.

The deſign is that of bringing all mankind to an exalted, pure, and ſpiritual happineſs, by teaching, enforcing, and begetting in them love and obedience to God. This appears from many paſſages in the Old Teſtament, and from almoſt every part of the New. Now we are not here to inquire in what manner an almighty being could ſooneſt and moſt effectually accompliſh this. But the queſtion is, whether, laying down the ſtate of things as it has been, is, and probably will be, for our foundation, there be not a remarkable fitneſs in the diſpenſations aſcribed to God in the ſcriptures, to produce this glorious effect: and whether the perſons who adminiſtered theſe diſpenſations did not here concur with a ſurprizing uniformity, though none of them ſaw God's ultimate deſign completely, and ſome but very imperfectly; juſt as brutes by their inſtincts, and children by the workings of their natural faculties, contribute to their own preſervation, improvement, and happineſs without at all foreſeeing, that they do this. If we alter any of the circumſtances of the microcoſm or macrocoſm, of the frame of our own natures, or of the external world that ſurrounds us, we ſhall have queſtion riſe up after queſtion in an endleſs ſeries, and ſhall never be ſatisfied, unleſs God ſhould be pleaſed to produce happineſs inſtantaneouſly, *i. e.* without any means, or ſecondary inſtrumental cauſes, at all; and, even then, we ſhould only be where we were at our firſt ſetting out, if things be conſidered in the true, ultimate light. We are therefore to lay down the real ſtate of things, as our foundation, *i. e.* we are to ſuppoſe man to be in a ſtate of good

mixed

mixed with evil, born with appetites, and expoſed to temptations, to which if he yields, ſuffering muſt follow; which ſuffering, however, tends to eradicate the diſpoſition from whence it flowed, and to implant a better: we are to ſuppoſe him to be endued with voluntary powers, which enable him to model his affections and actions according to a rule; and that the love of God, his ultimate happineſs, can never be genuine, but by his firſt learning to fear God, by his being mortified to pleaſure, honour, and profit, and the moſt refined ſelfiſh deſires, and by his loving his neighbour as himſelf, *i. e.* we muſt ſuppoſe all that which practical writers mean by a ſtate of trial, temptation, moral exerciſe and improvement, and of practical free-will. Let us ſee therefore, how the ſeveral diſpenſations mentioned in the ſcriptures, their being recorded there, and the ſubordinate parts, which the prophets and apoſtles acted, conſpired to bring about this ultimate end of man, both in each individual, and in the whole aggregate, conſidered as one great individual, as making up the myſtical body of Chriſt, according to the language of St. *Paul*; and inquire, whether, if all other reaſons were ſet aſide, the mere harmony and concurrence of ſo many parts, and ſo many perſons removed from each other by long intervals of time, in this one great deſign, will not compel us to acknowledge the genuineneſs, truth, and divine authority, of the ſcriptures.

The firſt thing which preſents itſelf to us in the ſcriptures, is the hiſtory of the creation and fall. Theſe are not to be accounted for, as was ſaid above, being the foundation upon which we go. However, the recording them by *Moſes*, as tradition began to grow weak and uncertain, has been of great uſe to all thoſe, who have had them communicated by this means perfectly or imperfectly, *i. e.* to a great part of the world. This hiſtory impreſſes an awful and amiable ſenſe of the Divine Being, our creator and judge;

judge; ſhews the heinouſneſs of ſin; and mortifies us to this world, by declaring that our paſſage through it muſt be attended with labour and ſorrow. We find ourſelves in this ſtate; revealed religion did not bring us into it: nor is this ſtate an objection to revealed religion, more than to natural: however, revealed religion goes a ſtep higher than natural, and ſhews the immediate ſecondary cauſe, viz. the ſin and wilful diſobedience of our firſt parents. And when the account of paradiſe, of man's expulſion thence, and of the curſe paſt upon him in the beginning of *Geneſis*, are compared with the removal of this curſe, of ſorrow, crying, pain, and death, with the renovation of all things, and with man's reſtoration to the tree of life and paradiſe, and his admiſſion into the new *Jeruſalem* in the laſt chapters of the revelation, hope and fear quicken each other; and both conſpire to purify the mind, and to advance the great deſign conſidered under this propoſition.

How far the deluge was neceſſary, *cæteris manentibus*, for the purification of thoſe who were deſtroyed by it, *i. e.* for accompliſhing this great end in them, we cannot preſume to ſay. It is ſufficient, that there is no contrary preſumption, that no methods conſiſtent with the ſtate of things in the ancient world were neglected, as far as we know, and that we are not in the leaſt able to propoſe a better ſcheme. We leave theſe rebellious, unhappy people, now tranſlated into another ſtate, to the ſame kind Providence which attended them in this, and all whoſe puniſhments on this ſide the grave are for melioration. However, the evident footſteps of this in the world, and the clear tradition of it, which would continue for ſeveral ages, alſo the hiſtory of it delivered by *Moſes*, have an unqueſtionable good tendency. Sinners, who reflect at all, cannot but be alarmed at ſo dreadful an inſtance of divine ſeverity. Farther, if this hiſtory ſhould open

to us a new relation, viz. that which we bear to the comets, this, compared with other parts of the ſcriptures, may give us hereafter ſuch intimations concerning the kind, degree, and duration of future puniſhment, as will make the moſt obdurate tremble, and work in them that fear which is the beginning of wiſdom, and of the perfect love which caſteth out fear. At the ſame time we may obſerve, that the covenant which God made, not only with *Noah* and his poſterity, but with all living creatures, after the flood, has a direct and immediate tendency to beget love.

The confuſion of languages, the conſequent diſperſion of mankind, and the ſhortening of the lives of the poſtdiluvians, all concurred to check the exorbitant growth and infection of wickedneſs. And we may judge how neceſſary theſe checks were, *cæteris manentibus*, from the great idolatry and corruption which appeared in the world within leſs than a thouſand years after the flood. The patriarchal revelations mentioned and intimated by *Moſes* had the ſame good effects, and were the foundations of thoſe pagan religions, and, in great meaſure, of that moral ſenſe, which, corrupt and imperfect as they were, could not but be far preferable to an entire want of theſe. It it be objected, that, according to this, greater checks, and more divine communications, were wanted; I anſwer, that a greater diſperſion, or ſhortening of human life, might have prevented the deſtined increaſe of mankind, or the growth of knowledge, civil and religious, &c. and that more or more evident divine interpoſitions might have reſtrained the voluntary powers too much, or have precluded that faith which is neceſſary to our ultimate perfection. Theſe are conjectures indeed; but they are upon the level with the objection, which is conjectural alſo.

The next remarkable particular that occurs, is the calling of *Abraham*, the father of the faithful. Now in

in this part of the ſcripture hiſtory, as it is explained by the New Teſtament, we have the ſtrongeſt evidences of God's great deſign to purify and perfect mankind. He is called to forſake his relations, friends and country, leſt he ſhould be corrupted by idolatry; he receives the promiſe of the land of *Canaan*, without ſeeing any probable means of obtaining it, beſides this promiſe, in order to wean him from the dependence on external means; he waits for a ſon till all natural expectations ceaſed, for the ſame purpoſe; by obtaining him he learns to truſt in God notwithſtanding apparent impoſſibilities; and the command to ſacrifice *his ſon, his only ſon Iſaac, whom he loved*, affords him a noble opportunity of exerciſing this truſt, and of ſhewing, that his principle of obedience to God was already ſuperior to the pureſt of earthly affections. Laſtly, when God promiſes him, as a reward for all his faith and obedience, as the higheſt bleſſing, that *in him and his ſeed all the nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed*, we muſt conceive this to be a declaration, firſt, that God himſelf is infinitely benevolent; and, ſecondly, that the happineſs of *Abraham*, of his ſeed, and of all mankind who were to be bleſſed in his ſeed, muſt ariſe from their imitation of God in his benevolence. This whole univerſe is therefore a ſyſtem of benevolence, or, as St. *Paul* expreſſes it, a body, which, being *fitly framed and compacted together, increaſeth itſelf in love.*

As to the objection which is ſometimes made to the ſacrifice of *Iſaac*, we may obſerve, that *Abraham* had himſelf received ſo many divine communications, and had been acquainted with ſo many made to his anceſtors, that he had no doubt about the commands coming from God, did not even aſk himſelf the queſtion. It is probable, that in that early age there had as yet been few or no falſe pretences, or illuſions. *Abraham* could as little doubt of God's right to *Iſaac*'s life, or of his care of him in

another ſtate. Theſe things were parts of the patriarchal religion. And yet great faith was required in *Abraham*, before he could overcome his natural affection and tenderneſs for *Iſaac* out of a principle of obedience to God, and truſt God for the accompliſhment of his promiſe, though he commanded him to deſtroy the only apparent means of accompliſhing it. Unleſs *Abraham* had been highly advanced in faith and obedience, he could not have ſtood ſo ſevere a trial; but this trial would greatly confirm theſe. And thus this hiſtory is ſo far from being liable to objection, that it is peculiarly conformable to thoſe methods, which mere reaſon and experience dictate as the proper ones, for advancing and perfecting true religion in the ſoul. When the typical nature of it is alſo conſidered, one cannot ſurely doubt of its divine authority. And, in the previous ſteps, through which *Abraham* paſſed in order to obtain this bleſſing, we have an adumbration and example of that faith, patience, and gradual progreſs in the ſpiritual life, which are neceſſary to all thoſe who hope to be *bleſſed with faithful Abraham.*

Let us next paſs on to *Moſes*, and the *Iſraelites* under his conduct. Here we enter upon the conſideration of that people, who are the type of mankind in general, and of each individual in particular; who were the keepers of the oracles of God, and who, under God, agreeably to his promiſe to *Abraham*, have been, and will hereafter be a bleſſing to all nations, and the means of reſtoring man to his paradiſiacal ſtate. And firſt they are oppreſſed with a cruel ſlavery in *Egypt*, leſt, being delighted with its fertility, and the preſent pleaſures of ſenſe which it afforded, they ſhould forget their true earthly country, *the land of promiſe.* They then ſee the moſt amazing judgments inflicted upon their enemies the *Egyptians* by God, whilſt they themſelves were protected and delivered, that ſo they might learn confidence in his power and favour, and

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be thus prepared for their inſtitution in religion, and their trial and purification in the wilderneſs. And here the awful delivery of the law, their being fed from day to day by miracle, their being kept from all commerce with other nations, and from all cares of this world in building, planting, &c. till their old habits, and *Egyptian* cuſtoms and idolatries, were quite effaced, and the practice of the new law eſtabliſhed, their having the hiſtory of the world, and particularly of their anceſtors, laid before them in one view, their tabernacle, their numerous rites and ceremonies, additional to thoſe of the patriarchal religion, and oppoſite to the growing idolatries of their neighbours the *Egyptians* and *Canaanites*, and which, beſides their uſes as types, were memorials of their relation to God, and of his conſtant preſence and protection, and, laſtly, the total extinction of that murmuring generation, who longed for the fleſh-pots of *Egypt*, cannot but appear to be intended for the purification of this choſen people, as being remarkably analogous to the methods of purification, which every good man experiences in himſelf, and ſees in others, *i. e.* cannot but appear highly conducive to the great deſign conſidered under this propoſition. At laſt, the education and inſtruction of this people being finiſhed, they are admitted to inherit the earthly promiſe made to their forefathers, and take poſſeſſion of the land of *Canaan* under *Joſhua*. And thus we come to a remarkable period in God's diſpenſations to them.

Now therefore they are, in ſome meaſure, left to themſelves, for the ſake of moral improvement, the divine interpoſitions being far leſs frequent and ſolemn, than at the firſt erection of the theocracy under *Moſes*'s adminiſtration. However, there were many ſupernatural interpoſitions, appointments, favours, corrections, &c. from *Joſhua* to *Malachi*, on account of their yet infant ſtate in reſpect of internal purity,

whoſe tendency to improve both the body politic of the nation, and each individual, is ſufficiently evident. After *Malachi* they were entirely left to themſelves; their canon being completed, they were then only to hear and digeſt what *Moſes* and the prophets had delivered unto them; and by this means to prepare themſelves for the laſt and completeſt diſpenſation.

But, before we enter upon this, let us briefly conſider the ſtate of the gentile world, in the interval between *Abraham* and Chriſt, and what intimations the Old Teſtament gives us of their being alſo under the care of Providence, and in a ſtate of moral diſcipline. They had then, according to this, Firſt, the traditions of patriarchal revelations. Secondly, All the nations in the neighbourhood of *Canaan* had frequent opportunities and motives to inform themſelves of the true religion. Thirdly, All thoſe who conquered them at any time could not but learn ſomething both from their ſubjection, and their deliverance afterwards. Fourthly, The captivities by *Salmaneſer* and *Nebuchadnezzar* carried the knowledge of the true God to many diſtant nations. Laſtly, The diſtractions of the *Jewiſh* ſtate during the cotemporary empires of *Syria* and *Egypt*, the riſe of the *Samaritan* religion, and the tranſlation of the Old Teſtament into *Greek*, conduced eminently to the ſame purpoſe. And as it is neceſſary in the preſent ſtate of things, for the exerciſe of various affections, and our moral improvement, that there ſhould be degrees and ſubordinations in common things, ſo it ſeems equally neceſſary, that it ſhould be ſo in religious matters: and thus the Gentiles may have had, in the interval between *Abraham* and Chriſt, all that ſuited their other circumſtances, all that they could have improved by internal voluntary purity, other things remaining the ſame, which is always ſuppoſed. And it is remarkable in the view of this propoſition, that we learn ſo much

much from the ſcriptures concerning the moral diſcipline which God afforded to the *Gentiles.*

When we come to the New Teſtament, the great deſign of all God's diſpenſations appears in a ſtill more conſpicuous manner. Here we ſee how Chriſt began to erect his ſpiritual kingdom, and the apoſtles extended it; we have the ſublimeſt doctrines, and pureſt precepts, for effecting it in ourſelves and others, and the ſtrongeſt aſſurances, that it will be effected at laſt, that this leaven will continue to operate till the whole lump be leavened. But, above all, it is remarkable, that the principal means for effecting this is by ſubmiſſion and ſufferance, not reſiſtance, and external violence. The preachers are to undergo ſhame, perſecution, and death, as the Lord of life and glory did before them. This is that *fooliſhneſs of God*, which is *wiſer than men*, and that *weakneſs of God*, which is *ſtronger than men.* Theſe means ſeem fooliſh and weak to the falſe wiſdom of this world. But if they be compared with the frame of our natures, and with the real conſtitution of things, they will appear to be perfectly ſuited to produce in all mankind that beſt of ends, the annihilation of ſelf, and worldly deſires, and the pure and perfect love of God, and of all his creatures, in and through him.

Setting aſide therefore the greatneſs of this end, and its ſuitableneſs to the divine goodneſs, ſetting aſide alſo the miracles which have concurred in it, I ſay that the coincidence of the hiſtories, precepts, promiſes, threatenings, and prophecies of the ſcriptures in this one point is an argument not only of their genuineneſs and truth, but of their divine authority. Had the writers been guided by their own ſpirits, and not by the ſupernatural influences of the ſpirit of truth, they could neither have opened to us the various diſpenſations of God tending to this one point, nor have purſued it themſelves, with ſuch entire ſteadineſs

and uniformity, through ſo many different ages of the world.

The gradual opening of this deſign is an argument to the ſame purpoſe. Man's wiſdom, if it could have formed ſuch a deſign, would have ruſhed forward upon it prematurely. At the ſame time we may obſerve, that this deſign is implied in the ſcriptures from the firſt, though not expreſſed ſo as to be then underſtood; which is another argument of their divine original.

Cor. From the reaſoning uſed under this propoſition we may be led to believe, that all the great events which happen in the world, have the ſame uſe as the diſpenſations, recorded in the ſcriptures, viz. that of being a courſe of moral diſcipline for nations and individuals, and of preparing the world for future diſpenſations. Thus the irruption of the barbarous nations into the *Roman* empire, the *Mahometan* impoſture, the corruptions of the chriſtian religion, the ignorance and darkneſs which reigned for ſome centuries during the groſſeſt of theſe corruptions, the reformation, reſtoration of letters, and the invention of printing, three great cotemporary events which ſucceeded the dark times, the riſe of the enthuſiaſtical ſects ſince the reformation, the vaſt increaſe and diffuſion of learning in the preſent times, the growing extenſiveneſs of commerce between various nations, the great prevalence of infidelity amongſt both *Jews* and *Chriſtians*, the diſperſion of *Jews* and *Jeſuits* into all known parts of the world, &c. &c. are all events, which, however miſchievous ſome of them may ſeem to human wiſdom, are, *cæteris manentibus*, the moſt proper and effectual way of haſtening the kingdom of Chriſt, and the renovation of all things.

PROP.

PROP. XXVII.

Divine Communications, Miracles, and Prophecies, are agreeable to Natural Religion, and even ſeem neceſſary in the Infancy of the World.

SINCE God is a being of infinite juſtice, mercy, and bounty, according to natural religion, it is reaſonable to expect, that if the deficiencies of natural reaſon, or the inattention of mankind to the footſteps of his providence, were ſuch at any time, as that all the world were in danger of being loſt in ignorance, irreligion, and idolatry, God ſhould interpoſe by extraordinary inſtruction, by alarming inſtances of judgment and mercy, and by prophetical declarations of things to come, in order to teach men his power, his juſtice, and his goodneſs, by ſenſible proofs and manifeſtations. We muſt not ſay here, that God could not ſuffer this; but inquire from hiſtory, whether he has or no. Now I ſuppoſe it will eaſily be acknowledged, that this was the caſe with the gentile world in ancient times, and that the *Judaical* and *Chriſtian* inſtitutions have greatly checked irreligion and idolatry, and advanced true natural religion; which is a remarkable coincidence in favour of theſe inſtitutions, though all other evidences for them were ſet aſide. Neither muſt we ſay here, that ſince God permits groſs ignorance in ſome nations, the *Hottentots* for inſtance, even to this day, he might have permitted it in all mankind. Allow that we know ſo little of his unſearchable judgments, as not to be able to make any certain concluſion: yet ſurely it is much more agreeable to the forenamed attributes, and to the analogies of other things, that the bulk of mankind ſhould have ſuch a knowledge of God, as ſuits their intellectual faculties, and other

other circumſtances, and carries them forwards in moral improvement, than that all ſhould ſtand ſtill, or go backwards, or make leſs improvement in religion, than tallies with their improvements in other things; alſo that there ſhould be a ſubordination in religious advantages, rather than a perfect equality.

Natural religion alſo teaches us to conſider God as our governor, judge, and father. Now all theſe ſuperiors have two ways of adminiſtration, inſtruction and providence for the well-being of their inferiors, ordinary and extraordinary. It is therefore natural to expect upon great occaſions an extraordinary interpoſition by revelation, miracle, and prophecy; and that eſpecially in that infancy of the world after the deluge, which both ſacred and profane hiſtory aſſure us of; inaſmuch as both ſtates and individuals require much more of the extraordinary interpoſition of governors and parents in their infancy, than afterwards: all which has a remarkable correſpondence with the hiſtory of revelation, as it is in fact. And the analogical preſumptions for miracles, in this and the laſt paragraph, ſeem at leaſt equal to any preſumption we have, or can have, in this our ſtate of ignorance of the whole of things, againſt them.

But there is another argument in favour of miraculous interpoſitions, which may be drawn from the foregoing theory of human nature. I take it for granted, that mankind have not been upon this earth from all eternity. Eternity neither ſuits an imperfect, finite race of beings, nor our habitation the earth. It cannot have revolved round the ſun, as it does now from all eternity; it muſt have had ſuch changes made in it from its own fabric and principles, from the ſhocks of comets, &c. in infinite time, as would be inconſiſtent with our ſurvival. There was therefore a time when man was firſt placed upon the

the earth. In what ſtate was he then placed? An infant, with his mind a blank, void of ideas, as children now are born? He would periſh inſtantly, without a ſeries of miracles to preſerve, educate, and inſtruct him. Or if he be ſuppoſed an adult with a blank mind, *i. e.* without ideas, aſſociations, and the voluntary powers of walking, handling, ſpeaking, &c. the concluſion is the ſame; he muſt periſh alſo, unleſs conducted by a miraculous interpoſition and guardianſhip. He muſt therefore have ſo much of knowledge, and of voluntary and ſecondarily automatic powers, amongſt which ſpeech muſt be reckoned as a principal one, impreſſed upon him in the way of inſtinct, as would be neceſſary for his own preſervation, and that of his offspring; and this inſtinct is, to all intents and purpoſes, divine revelation, ſince he did not acquire it by natural means. It is alſo of the nature of prophecy; for it ſeems impoſſible for mankind to ſubſiſt upon the earth, as it now is, without ſome foreknowledge, and the conſequent methods of providing for futurity, ſuch, for inſtance, as brutes have, or even greater, ſince man, unprovided with manual arts, is peculiarly expoſed to dangers, neceſſities, and hardſhips.

Let us next conſider, how the firſt men are to be provided with the knowledge of God, and a moral ſenſe: for it ſeems neceſſary, that they ſhould be poſſeſſed of ſome degree of theſe; elſe the ſenſual and ſenſual deſires would be ſo exorbitant, as to be inconſiſtent both with each man's own ſafety, and with that of his neighbour; as may be gathered from the accounts of ſavage nations, who yet are not entirely deſtitute of the knowledge of God, and the moral ſenſe. Now, to deduce the exiſtence and attributes of God, even in a very imperfect manner, from natural phænomena, requires, as it ſeems to me, far more knowledge and ratiocination, than men could have for many generations, from their natural powers;

and

and that eſpecially if we ſuppoſe language not to be inſpired, but attained in a natural way. And it appears both from the foregoing account of the moral ſenſe, and from common obſervation, that this requires much time, care, and cultivation, beſides the previous knowledge of God, before it can be a match for the impetuoſity of natural deſires. We may conclude therefore, that the firſt men could not attain to that degree of the knowledge of God, and a moral ſenſe, which was neceſſary for them, without divine inſpiration.

There are ſeveral particulars in the *Moſaic* account of the creation, fall, and circumſtances of the ancient world, which tally remarkably with the method of reaſoning uſed here. Thus, man is at firſt placed in a paradiſe, where there was nothing noxious, and conſequently where he would need leſs miraculous interpoſition in order to preſerve him. He lives upon the fruits of the earth, which want no previous arts of preparing them, and which would ſtrike him by their ſmells, and, after an inſtance or two, incite him to pluck and taſte: whereas animal diet, beſides its inconſiſtency with a ſtate of pure innocence and happineſs, requires art and preparation neceſſarily. There is only one man, and one woman, created, that ſo the occaſions for exerting the ſocial affections may not offer themſelves in any great degree, before theſe affections are generated; but, on the contrary, the affections may grow naturally, as it were, out of the occaſions. The nakedneſs, and want of ſhame, in our firſt parents, are concurring evidences of the abſence of art, acquired affections, evil, *&c. i. e.* of a paradiſiacal ſtate. In this ſtate they learnt to give names to the animal world, perhaps from the automatic and ſemivoluntary exertions of the organs of ſpeech, which the ſight of the creatures, or the ſound of their ſeveral cries, would excite, having probably a ſufficient ſtock of language for

for communication with God and for converſing with each other about their daily food, and other neceſſary things, given them by immediate inſtinct or inſpiration. And thus they would be initiated, by naming the animals, into the practice of inventing, learning, and applying words. For the ſame reaſons, we may ſuppoſe, that they learnt many other things, and particularly the habit of learning, during their abode in paradiſe. Nay, it may perhaps be, that this growth of acquired knowledge, with the pleaſantneſs of it, might put them upon learning evil as well as good, and excite the forbidden curioſity. After the fall, we find God providing them with clothes, *Cain* baniſhed from the preſence of God, an argument that others were permitted to have recourſe to this preſence to aſk counſel, &c. his poſterity inventing arts for themſelves, *Enoch* and *Noah* walking with God before the flood, and *Abraham* afterwards; all the antediluvian patriarchs long-lived, the poſtdiluvian long-lived alſo for ſome generations; amongſt other reaſons, that they might inſtruct poſterity in religious and other important truths; and the divine interpoſitions continuing through the whole antediluvian world, and gradually withdrawn in the poſtdiluvian. And it ſeems to me, to ſay the leaſt, a very difficult thing for any man, even at this day, to invent a more probable account of the firſt peopling of this earth, than that which *Moſes* has given us.

PROP.

PROP. XXVIII.

The Objection made againſt the Miracles recorded in the Scriptures, from their being contrary to the Courſe of Nature, is of little or no Force.

It is alleged here by the objectors, that the courſe of nature is fixed and immutable; and that this is evinced by the concurrent teſtimony of all mankind in all ages; and conſequently that the teſtimony of a few perſons, who affirm the contrary, cannot be admitted; but is, *ipſo facto*, invalidated by its oppoſing general, or even univerſal experience. Now to this I anſwer,

Firſt, That we do not, by admitting the teſtimony of mankind concerning the deſcent of heavy bodies upon the ſurface of our earth, the common effects of heat and cold, &c. ſuppoſe that this invalidates the teſtimony of thoſe who declare they have met with contrary appearances in certain caſes. Each party teſtifies what they have ſeen; and why may not the evidence of both be true? It does not follow, becauſe a thing has happened a thouſand, or ten thouſand times, that it never has failed, nor ever can fail. Nothing is more common or conſtant, than the effect of gravity in making all bodies upon the ſurface of our earth tend to its centre. Yet the rare extraordinary influences of magnetiſm and electricity can ſuſpend this tendency. Now, before magnetiſm and electricity were diſcovered, and verified by a variety of concurrent facts, there would have been as much reaſon to diſallow the evidence of their particular effects atteſted by eye-witneſſes, as there is now to diſallow the particular miracles recorded in the ſcriptures; and yet we ſee that ſuch a diſallowance would have been a haſty concluſion, would have

have been quite contrary to the true nature of things. And, in fact, whatever may be the caſe of a few perſons, and particularly of thoſe, who think that they have an intereſt in diſproving revealed religion, the generality of mankind, learned and unlearned, philoſophical and vulgar, in all ages, have had no ſuch diſpoſition to reject a thing well atteſted by witneſſes of credit, becauſe it was contrary to the general, or even univerſal, tenor of former obſervations. Now it is evident to conſidering perſons, eſpecially if they reflect upon the foregoing hiſtory of aſſociation, that the diſpoſitions to aſſent and diſſent are generated in the human mind from the ſum total of the influences, which particular obſervations have had upon it. It follows therefore, ſince the bulk of mankind, of all ranks and orders, have been diſpoſed to receive facts the moſt ſurprizing, and contrary to the general tenor, upon their being atteſted in a certain limited degree, that extraordinary facts are not, in a certain way of conſidering the thing, out of the tenor of nature, but agreeable to it; that here therefore, as well as in common facts, the ſtreſs is to be laid upon the credibility of the witneſſes; and that to do otherwiſe is an argument either of ſome great ſingularity of mind, or of an undue biaſs.

Secondly, If it ſhould be alleged by the objectors, that they do not mean, by the courſe of nature, that tenor of common obſervations which occurred to the firſt rude ages of the world, or even that tenor which is uſually called ſo at preſent; but thoſe more general laws of matter and motion, to which all the various phænomena of the world, even thoſe which are apparently moſt contrary to one another, may be reduced; and that it is probable, that univerſal experience would concur to ſupport the true laws of nature of this kind, were mankind ſufficiently induſtrious and accurate in bringing together the

the facts, and drawing the concluſions from them; in which caſe, any deviations from the tenor of nature, thus ſupported and explained, would be far more improbable, than according to the ſuppoſition of the foregoing paragraph; we anſwer, that this objection is a mere conjecture. Since we do not yet know what theſe true laws of matter and motion are, we cannot preſume to ſay whether all phænomena are reducible to them, or not. Modern philoſophers have indeed made great advances in natural knowledge; however, we are ſtill in our infant ſtate, in reſpect of it, as much as former ages, if the whole of things be taken into conſideration. And this objection allows and ſuppoſes it to be ſo. Since therefore it was the proper method for former ages, in order to make advances in real knowledge, to abide by the award of credible teſtimonies, however contrary theſe teſtimonies might appear to their then notions and analogies, ſo this is alſo the proper method for us.

If indeed we put the courſe of nature for that ſeries of events, which follow each other in the order of cauſe and effect by the divine appointment, this would be an accurate and philoſophical way of ſpeaking; but then we muſt at once acknowledge, that we are ſo ignorant of what may be the divine purpoſes and appointments, of ſecret cauſes, and of the correſponding variety of events, that we can only appeal to the facts, to credible relations of what actually has been, in order to know what is agreeable to the courſe of nature thus explained. The ſcripture miracles may not be at all contrary to its fixedneſs and immutability. Nor can any objection lie againſt them, if we conſider things in this light, from the preſent notions of philoſophical men, *i. e.* from the courſe of nature, underſtood in a popular ſenſe; ſince this falls ſo ſhort of the true courſe of nature as here defined, *i. e.* as admitting

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the inſtrumentality of beings ſuperior to us, men divinely inſpired, good angels, evil ſpirits, and many other influences, of which our preſent philoſophy can take no cognizance.

With reſpect to moral analogy, the caſe is ſomewhat different. If the moral attributes of God, and the general rules of his providence, be ſuppoſed to be eſtabliſhed upon a ſure footing, then a ſeries of events, which ſhould be contrary to theſe, would have a ſtrong preſumption againſt them. And yet it becomes us to be very diffident here alſo. God is infinite, and we finite: we may therefore, from ſeeing only a ſmall portion, judge what we ſee to be different from what it is. However, revealed religion has no occaſion in general for any ſuch apology. Natural and revealed religion, the word and works of God, are in all principal things moſt wonderfully analogous; as has been ſufficiently ſhewn by the advocates for revealed religion, and moſt eſpecially by biſhop *Butler* in his analogy. As far therefore as moral analogy carries weight, there is poſitive evidence for the ſcripture miracles. And our comprehenſion of natural analogy is ſo imperfect as ſcarce to afford any preſumption againſt them; but leaves the evidence in their favour, of nearly the ſame ſtrength as it would have had for other facts.

Thirdly, Let it be obſerved, that the evidences for the ſcripture miracles are ſo numerous, and, in other reſpects, ſo ſtrong, as to be nearly equal to any evidences that can be brought for the moſt common facts. For it is very manifeſt, as has been obſerved before, that a great number of credible evidences make a ſum total, that is equal to unity, or abſolute certainty, as this has been conſidered in the foregoing part of this work, nearer than by any perceptible difference: and the greateſt number can never arrive quite to unity. The evidence therefore for common facts cannot exceed that for the ſcripture

miracles by more than an imperceptible difference, if we eſtimate evidences according to the trueſt and moſt accurate manner. Hence the nearly equal evidences for each muſt eſtabliſh each in nearly an equal degree, unleſs we ſuppoſe either ſome ſuch inconſiſtency between them, as that, common facts being allowed, the ſcripture miracles muſt be abſolutely rejected, or that there is ſome evidence againſt the ſcripture miracles, which may be put in competition with that for them; neither of which things can be ſaid with any colour of reaſon.

Fourthly, This whole matter may be put in another, and perhaps a more natural, as well as a more philoſophical light; and that eſpecially if the foregoing account of the mind be allowed. Aſſociation, *i. e.* analogy, perfect and imperfect, is the only foundation upon which we in fact do, or can, or ought to aſſent; and conſequently a diſſonance from analogy, or a repugnancy thereto, is a neceſſary foundation for diſſent. Now it happens ſometimes, that the ſame thing is ſupported and impugned by different analogies; or, if we put repugnance to analogy as equivalent to miracle, that both a fact and its non-exiſtence imply a miracle; or, ſince this cannot be, that that ſide alone, which is repugnant to the moſt and the moſt perfect analogies, is miraculous, and therefore incredible. Let us weigh the ſcripture miracles in this ſcale. Now the progreſs of the human mind, as may be ſeen by all the inquiries into it, and particularly by the hiſtory of aſſociation, is a thing of a determinate nature; a man's thoughts, words, and actions, are all generated by ſomething previous; there is an eſtabliſhed courſe for theſe things, an analogy, of which every man is a judge from what he feels in himſelf, and ſees in others: and to ſuppoſe any number of men in determinate circumſtances to vary from this general tenor of human nature in like circumſtances, is a miracle,

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and may be made a miracle of any magnitude, *i. e.* incredible to any degree, by increaſing the number and magnitude of the deviations. It is therefore a miracle in the human mind, as great as any can be conceived in the human body, to ſuppoſe that infinite multitudes of chriſtians, *Jews*, and heathens in the primitive times, ſhould have borne ſuch unqueſtionable teſtimony, ſome expreſsly, others by indirect circumſtances, as hiſtory informs us they did, to the miracles ſaid to be performed by Chriſt, and his apoſtles, upon the human body, unleſs they were really performed. In like manner, the reception which the miracles recorded in the Old Teſtament met with, is a miracle, unleſs thoſe miracles were true. Thus alſo the very exiſtence of the books of the Old and New Teſtaments, of the *Jewiſh* and Chriſtian religions, &c. &c. are miracles, as is abundantly ſhewn by the advocates for chriſtianity, unleſs we allow the ſcripture miracles. Here then a man muſt either deny all analogy and aſſociation, and become an abſolute ſceptic, or acknowledge that very ſtrong analogies may ſometimes be violated, *i. e.* he muſt have recourſe to ſomething miraculous, to ſomething ſupernatural, according to his narrow views. The next queſtion then will be, which of the two oppoſite miracles will agree beſt with all his other notions; whether it be more analogous to the nature of God, providence, the allowed hiſtory of the world, the known progreſs of man in this life, &c. &c. to ſuppoſe that God imparted to certain ſelect perſons, of eminent piety, the power of working miracles; or to ſuppoſe that he confounded the underſtandings, affections, and whole train of aſſociations, of entire nations, ſo as that men, who, in all other things, ſeem to have been conducted in a manner like all other men, ſhould, in reſpect of the hiſtory of Chriſt, the prophets and apoſtles, act in a manner repugnant to all our ideas and experiences. Now, as this

laſt ſuppoſition cannot be maintained at all upon the footing of deiſm, ſo it would be but juſt as probable as the firſt, even though the objector ſhould deny the poſſibility of the being of a God. For the leaſt preſumption, that there may be a being of immenſe or infinite power, knowledge, and goodneſs, immediately turns the ſcale in favour of the firſt ſuppoſition.

Fifthly, It is to be conſidered, that the evidences for the ſcripture miracles are many, and moſt of them independent upon one another, whereas the diſpenſation itſelf is a connected thing, and the miracles remarkably related to each other. If therefore only ſo much as one miracle could be proved to have been really wrought in confirmation of the *Jewiſh* or Chriſtian revelations, there would be leſs objection to the ſuppoſition of a ſecond; and, if this be proved, ſtill leſs to that of a third, &c. till at laſt the reluctance to receive them would quite vaniſh (which indeed appears to have been the caſe in the latter part of the primitive times, when the inconteſtable evidences for the chriſtian miracles had been ſo much examined and conſidered, as quite to overcome this reluctance; and it ſeems difficult to account for the credulity in receiving falſe miracles, which then appeared, but upon ſuppoſition, that many true ones had been wrought). But it is not ſo with the evidences. The greateſt part of theſe have ſo little dependence on the reſt, as may be ſeen even from this chapter, that they muſt be ſet aſide ſeparately by the objector. Here it ought to be added, that the objectors have ſcarce ever attempted to ſet aſide any part of the evidence, and never ſucceeded in ſuch an attempt; which is of itſelf a ſtrong argument in favour of the ſcriptures, ſince this is plainly the moſt natural and eaſy way of diſproving a thing that is falſe. It ought alſo to be obſerved here, that the accompliſhment of prophecy, by implying a miracle, does in like manner overbear the reluctance to receive

miracles.

miracles. So that if any conſiderable events, which have already happened in the world, can be proved to have been foretold in ſcripture in a manner exceeding chance, and human foreſight, the objection to miracles, conſidered in this propoſition, falls to the ground at once.

Sixthly. If any one ſhould affirm or think, as ſome perſons ſeem to do, that a miracle is impoſſible, let him conſider, that this is denying God's omnipotence, and even maintaining, that man is the ſupreme agent in the univerſe.

PROP. XXIX.

The hiſtorical Evidences for the Genuineneſs, Truth, and divine Authority of the Scriptures do not grow leſs from Age to Age; but, on the Contrary, it may rather be preſumed, that they increaſe.

It is ſometimes alleged, as an indirect objection to the chriſtian religion, that the evidence for facts done in former times, and at remote places, decreaſes with the diſtance of time and place; and conſequently that a time may come hereafter, when the evidence for the chriſtian religion will be ſo inconſiderable as not to claim our aſſent, even allowing that it does ſo now. To this I anſwer,

Firſt, That printing has ſo far ſecured all conſiderable monuments of antiquity, as that no ordinary calamities of wars, diſſolutions of governments, &c. can deſtroy any material evidence now in being, or render it leſs probable, in any diſcernible degree, to thoſe who ſhall live five hundred or a thouſand years hence.

Secondly, That ſo many new evidences and coincidences have been diſcovered in favour of the *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian* hiſtories, ſince the three great concur-

ring events of printing, the reformation of religion in theſe weſtern parts, and the reſtoration of letters, as, in ſome meaſure, to make up for the evidences loſt in the preceding times; and ſince this improvement of the hiſtorical evidences is likely to continue, there is great reaſon to hope, that they will grow every day more and more irreſiſtible to all candid, ſerious inquirers.

One might alſo allege, if it were needful, that *our* proper buſineſs is to weigh carefully the evidence which appears at preſent, leaving the care of future ages to Providence; that the prophetical evidences are manifeſtly of an increaſing nature, and ſo may compenſate for a decreaſe in the hiſtorical ones; and that though, in a groſs way of ſpeaking, the evidences for facts diſtant in time and place are weakened by this diſtance, yet they are not weakened in an exact proportion in any caſe, nor in any proportion in all caſes. No one can think a fact relating to the *Turkiſh* empire leſs probable at *London* than at *Paris*, or at fifty years diſtance than at forty.

PROP. XXX.

The Prophecies delivered in the Scriptures prove the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, even previouſly to the Conſideration of the Genuineneſs of theſe Prophecies; but much more, if that be allowed.

In order to evince this propoſition, I will diſtinguiſh the prophecies into four kinds, and ſhew in what manner it holds in reſpect of each kind.

There are then contained in the ſcriptures,

Firſt, Prophecies that relate to the ſtate of the nations which bordered upon the land of *Canaan*.

Secondly, Thoſe that relate to the political ſtate of the *Iſraelites* and *Jews* in all ages.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The types and prophecies that relate to the office, time of appearance, birth, life, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of the promiſed *Meſſiah*, or Chriſt.

Fourthly, The prophecies that relate to the ſtate of the chriſtian church, eſpecially in the latter times, and to the ſecond coming of Chriſt.

I begin with the prophecies of the firſt kind, or thoſe which relate to the ſtate of *Amalek*, *Edom*, *Moab*, *Ammon*, *Tyre*, *Syria*, *Egypt*, *Nineveh*, *Babylon*, and the four great ſucceſſive empires of the *Babylonians*, *Perſians*, *Greeks*, and *Romans*. Now here I obſerve, Firſt, That if we admit both the genuineneſs of theſe prophecies and the truth of the common hiſtory of the ſcriptures, the very remarkable coincidence of the facts with the prophecies will put their divine authority out of all doubt; as I ſuppoſe every reader will acknowledge, upon recollecting the many particular prophecies of this kind, with their accompliſhments, which occur in the old Teſtament. Secondly, If we allow only the genuineneſs of theſe prophecies, ſo great a part of them may be verified by the remains of ancient pagan hiſtory, as to eſtabliſh the divine authority of that part. Thus, if *Daniel*'s prophecies of the image, and four beaſts, were written by him in the time of the *Babylonian* empire, if the prophecies concerning the fall of *Nineveh*, *Babylon*, *Tyre*, &c. be genuine, &c. even profane hiſtory will ſhew, that more than human foreſight was concerned in the delivery of them. Thirdly, That ſuch of theſe prophetic events as remain to this day, or were evidently poſterior to the delivery of the prophecies, prove their divine authority even antecedently to the conſideration of their genuineneſs, as is affirmed in the former part of the propoſition. Of this kind are the perpetual ſlavery of *Egypt*; the perpetual deſolation of *Tyre* and *Babylon*; the wild, unconquered ſtate of the

Iſhmaelites; the great power and ſtrength of the *Roman* empire beyond thoſe of the three foregoing empires; its diviſion into ten kingdoms; its not being ſubdued by any other, as the three foregoing were; the riſe of the *Mahometan* religion, and *Saracenic* empire; the limited continuance of this empire; and the riſe and progreſs of the empire of the *Turks*. To theſe we may add the tranſactions that paſſed between the cotemporary kingdoms of *Syria* and *Egypt*, propheſied of in the eleventh chapter of *Daniel*. For, ſince theſe prophecies reach down to the times of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, and the beginning ſubjection of theſe kingdoms to the *Roman* power, they cannot but have been delivered prior to the events, as may appear both from the conſideration of the Septuagint tranſlation of the book of *Daniel*, and the extinction of the Biblical *Hebrew* as a living language before that time, even though the book of *Daniel* ſhould not be conſidered as a genuine book; for which ſuſpicion there is, however, no foundation. Laſtly, we may remark, that theſe, and indeed all the other prophecies, have the ſame marks of genuineneſs as the reſt of the ſcriptures, or as any other books; that they cannot be ſeparated from the context without the utmoſt violence, ſo that, if this be allowed to be genuine, thoſe muſt alſo; that hiſtory and chronology were in ſo uncertain a ſtate in antient times, that the prophecies concerning foreign countries could not have been adapted to the facts, even after they had happened, with ſo much exactneſs as modern inquirers have ſhewn the ſcripture prophecies to be, by a learned nation, and much leſs by the *Jews*, who were remarkably ignorant of what paſſed in foreign countries; and that thoſe prophecies, which are delivered in the manner of dream and viſion, have a very ſtrong internal evidence for their genuineneſs, taken from the nature

ture of dreams, as this is explained in the foregoing part of this work.

I proceed, in the ſecond place, to ſhew how the prophecies, that relate to the political ſtate of the *Jews*, prove the divine authority of the ſcriptures. And here, paſſing by many prophecies of inferior note, and of a ſubordinate nature, we may confine ourſelves to the promiſe, or prophecy, of the land of *Canaan*, given to *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*; to the prophecies concerning the captivity of the ten tribes, and the *Babyloniſh* captivity of the two tribes, with their return after ſeventy years; and to thoſe concerning the much greater captivity and deſolation predicted to fall upon this choſen people in the twenty-eighth chapter of *Deuteronomy*, in various places of the prophecies, and by Chriſt and his apoſtles in the New Teſtament. There was no natural probability, at the time when theſe prophecies were delivered, that any of theſe events ſhould happen in the manner in which they were predicted, and have accordingly happened; but, in ſome, the utmoſt improbability: ſo that it muſt appear to every candid intelligent inquirer, that nothing leſs than ſupernatural knowledge could have enabled thoſe who delivered theſe predictions, to make them. The divine authority, therefore, of the books which contain theſe predictions, is unqueſtionable, provided we allow them to be genuine.

Now, beſides the forementioned evidences of this, theſe prophecies have ſome peculiar ones attending them. Thus the mere departure of the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*, in order to go to the land of *Canaan*, their burying *Jacob* in *Canaan*, and carrying *Joſeph*'s bones with them, plainly imply that the promiſe of this land had been given to their anceſtors. Thus alſo the prophecies relating to the captivities of *Iſrael* and *Judah*, and to their reſtorations, make ſo large a part of the old prophets, that, if they be not

genuine,

genuine, the whole books muſt be forged; and the genuineneſs of thoſe in the New Teſtament cannot but be allowed by all.

I come now, in the third place, to ſpeak of the types and prophecies that relate to Chriſt, the time of his appearance, his offices, birth, life, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion. Many of theſe are applied to him by himſelf, and by the authors of the books of the New Teſtament; but there are alſo many others, whoſe diſcovery and application are left to the ſagacity and induſtry of chriſtians in all ages. This ſeems to be a field of great extent, and the evidence ariſing from it of an increaſing nature. It is probable, that the chriſtians of the firſt ages were acquainted with ſo many more circumſtances relating to the life, death, &c. of Chriſt, as on this account to be able to apply a larger number of types and prophecies to him than we can. But then this may perhaps be compenſated to us by the daily opening of the ſcriptures, and our growing knowledge in the typical and prophetical nature of them. What is already diſcovered of this kind, ſeems no ways poſſible to be accounted for, but from the ſuppoſition, that God, by his power and foreknowledge, ſo ordered the actions, hiſtory, ceremonies, &c. of the *Patriarchs* and *Jews*, and the language of the prophets, as to make them correſpond with Chriſt, his offices, actions, and ſufferings. If any one doubts of this, let him attempt to apply the types and prophecies to any other perſon. I will juſt mention four claſſes, into which theſe types and prophecies may be diſtinguiſhed, and under each of them a few remarkable inſtances. There are then,

Firſt, Prophecies which evidently relate to Chriſt, and either to him alone, or to others in an inferior degree only. Such are that of *Jacob* concerning *Shiloh*, of *Moſes* concerning a great prophet and lawgiver

giver that ſhould come after him, of *Iſaiah* in his fifty-ſecond and fifty-third chapters of *Daniel*, concerning the *Meſſiah*, many in almoſt all the prophets concerning a great prince, a prince of the houſe of *David*, &c. who ſhould make a new convenant with his people, &c. &c.

Secondly, Typical circumſtances in the lives of eminent perſons, as of *Iſaac*, *Joſeph*, *Joſhua*, *David*, *Solomon*, *Jonah*; and in the common hiſtory of the *Jewiſh* people, as its being called out of *Egypt*.

Thirdly, Typical ceremonies in the *Jewiſh* worſhip as their ſacrifices in general, thoſe of the paſſover and day of expiation in particular, &c. To this head we may alſo refer the typical nature of the high prieſthood, and of the offices of king, prieſt and prophet, amongſt the *Jews*, &c.

Fourthly, The apparently incidental mention of many circumſtances in theſe things, which yet agree ſo exactly, and in a way ſo much above chance, with Chriſt, as to make it evident, that they were originally intended to be applied to him. The not breaking a bone of the Paſchal Lamb; the mention of renting the garment, and caſting lots upon the veſture, by *David*; of offering gall and vinegar, of looking on him whom they had pierced, of the third day upon numerous occaſions, &c. are circumſtances of this kind.

Now, theſe types and prophecies afford nearly the ſame evidence, whether we conſider the books of the Old Teſtament as genuine, or no. For no one calls in queſtion their being extant as we now have them, ſmall immaterial variations excepted, before the time of Chriſt's appearance. Many of them do indeed require the common hiſtory of the New Teſtament to be allowed as true. But there are ſome, thoſe, for inſtance, which relate to the humiliation and death of Chriſt, and the ſpirituality of his office, the proofs of whoſe accompliſhment are ſuffi-

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ciently evident to the whole world, even independently of this.

The fourth branch of the prophetical evidences are thoſe which relate to the chriſtian church. Here the three following particulars deſerve attentive conſideration.

Firſt, The predictions concerning a new and pure religion, which was to be ſet up by the coming of the promiſed *Meſſiah*.

Secondly, A great and general corruption of this religion, which was to follow in after-times.

Thirdly, The recovery of the chriſtian church from this corruption, by great tribulations; and the final eſtabliſhment of true and pure religion, called *the kingdom of righteouſneſs, of the ſaints, the new Jeruſalem*, &c.

The predictions of the firſt and third kinds abound every where in the old phophets, in the diſcourſes of Chriſt, and in the writings of the apoſtles. Thoſe of the ſecond kind are chiefly remarkable in *Daniel*, the *Revelation*, and the epiſtles of St. *Paul*, St. *Peter*, St. *John*, and St. *Jude*. In how ſurprizing a manner the events of the firſt and ſecond kind have anſwered to the predictions, cannot be unknown to any inquiſitive ſerious perſon, in any chriſtian country. At the ſame time it is evident, that the predictions of theſe things could have no foundation in probable conjectures when they were given. The events of the third claſs have not yet received their accompliſhment; but there have been for ſome centuries paſt, and are ſtill, perpetual advances and preparations made for them; and it now ſeems unreaſonable to doubt of the natural probability of their accompliſhment, unleſs we doubt at the ſame time of the truth of the religion itſelf. If it be true, it muſt, upon more diligent and impartial examination, both purify itſelf, and overcome all oppoſition.

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And it is remarkably agreeable to the tenor of Providence in other things, that that accompliſhment of prophecy, which will hereafter evidence the truth of the chriſtian religion in the moſt illuſtrious manner, ſhould be effected by preſent evidences of a leſs illuſtrious nature.

Let me add here, that many of the pſalms are peculiarly applicable to the reſtoration and converſion of the *Jews*, and to the final prevalence and eſtabliſhment of the chriſtian church, *i. e.* to the events of the third claſs.

PROP. XXXI.

The Degree of Obſcurity which is found in the Prophecies of the Scriptures, is not ſo great as to invalidate the foregoing Evidences for their divine Authority; but, on the Contrary, is itſelf an indirect Teſtimony in their Favour.

In order to prove this propoſition, I obſerve,

Firſt, That there are a ſufficient number of prophecies, whoſe interpretation is certain, clear, and preciſe, to ſhew that their agreement with the events predicted is far above the powers of chance, or human foreſight. But for the proof of this point, which takes in a great compaſs of literature, I muſt refer to the authors who have treated it in detail. And as thoſe who have examined this point with accuracy and impartiality, do, as I preſume, univerſally agree to the poſition here laid down, ſo thoſe who have not done ſo, can have no pretence for aſſerting the contrary; this being an hiſtorical matter which is to be determined as others of a like kind, viz. by the hiſtorical evidences. The reader may, however, form ſome judgment, in the groſs, even from the few inſtances, which are alleged under the laſt propoſition.

Secondly,

Secondly, That, even in the types and prophecies where interpreters differ from each other, the differences are often ſo inconſiderable, and the agreements ſo general, or elſe the prophecy ſo ſuited to the ſeveral events, to which it is applied by different interpreters, as to exclude both chance, and human foreſight, *i. e.* to infer a divine communication. This point requires alſo a careful and candid examination, and then, I think, cannot but be determined in the affirmative; eſpecially when the very great number of types and prophecies is taken into conſideration. Fitneſs in numerous inſtances is always an evidence of deſign; this is a method of reaſoning allowed, explicitly or implicitly, by all. And though the fitneſs may not be perfectly evident or preciſe in all, yet, if it be general, and the inſtances very numerous, the evidence of deſign, ariſing from it, may amount to any degree, and fall ſhort of certainty by an imperceptible difference only. And indeed it is upon theſe principles alone, that we prove the divine power, knowledge, and goodneſs, from the harmonies, and mutual fitneſſes, of viſible things, and from final cauſes, inaſmuch as theſe harmonies and fitneſſes are preciſely made out only in a few inſtances, if compared to thoſe in which we ſee no more than general harmonies, with particular ſubordinate difficulties, and apparent incongruities.

That the reader may ſee in a ſtronger light, how fully the fitneſſes, conſidered in the two foregoing paragraphs, exclude chance, and infer deſign, let him try to apply the types and prophecies of the four claſſes before-mentioned to other perſons and events beſides thoſe, to which chriſtian interpreters have applied them; and eſpecially let him conſider the types and prophecies relating to Chriſt. If deſign be excluded, theſe ought to be equally, or nearly ſo, applicable to other perſons and events; which yet, I think, no ſerious conſiderate perſon can affirm. Now, if chance

chance be once excluded, and the neceſſity of having recourſe to deſign admitted, we ſhall be inſtantly compelled to acknowledge a contrivance greater than human, from the long diſtances of time intervening between the prophecy and the event, with other ſuch like reaſons.

Thirdly, I obſerve that thoſe types and prophecies, whoſe interpretation is ſo obſcure, that interpreters have not been able to diſcover any probable application, cannot any ways invalidate the evidence ariſing from the reſt. They are analogous to thoſe parts of the works of nature, whoſe uſes, and ſubſerviency to the reſt are not yet underſtood. And as no one calls in queſtion the evidences of deſign, which appear in many parts of the human body, becauſe the uſes of others are not yet known; ſo the interpretations of propecy, which are clearly or probably made out, remain the ſame evidence of deſign, notwithſtanding that unſurmountable difficulties may hitherto attend many other parts of the prophetic writings.

Fourthly, It is predicted in the prophecies, that in the latter times great multitudes will be converted to the chriſtian faith; whereas thoſe who preach or propheſy, during the great apoſtaſy, ſhall be able to do this only in an obſcure, imperfect manner, and convert but few. Now the paſt and preſent obſcurity of prophecy agrees remarkably with this prediction; and the opening, which is already made, ſince the revival of letters, in applying the prophecies to the events, ſeems to preſage, that the latter times are now approaching; and that by the more full diſcovery of the true meaning of the prophetic writings, and of their aptneſs to ſignify the events predicted, there will be ſuch an acceſſion of evidence to the divine authority of the ſcriptures, as none but the wilfully ignorant, the profligate, and the obdurate, can withſtand. It is therefore a confirmation of the

prophetic

prophetic writings, that, by the obſcurity of one part of them, a way ſhould be prepared for effecting that glorious converſion of all nations, which is predicted in others, in the time and manner in which it is predicted.

PROP. XXXII.

It is no Objection to the foregoing Evidences taken from the Types and Prophecies, that they have double, or even manifold, Uſes and Applications; but rather a Confirmation of them.

For the foregoing evidences all reſt upon this foundation, viz. that there is an aptneſs in the types and prophecies to prefigure the events, greater than can be ſuppoſed to reſult from chance, or human foreſight. When this is evidently made out from the great number of the types and prophecies, and the degree of clearneſs and preciſeneſs of each, the ſhewing afterwards, that theſe have other uſes and applications, will rather prove the divine interpoſition, than exclude it. All the works of God, the parts of a human body, ſyſtems of minerals, plants, and animals, elementary bodies, planets, fixed ſtars, &c. have various uſes and ſubſerviencies, in reſpect of each other; and, if the ſcriptures be the word of God, analogy would lead one to expect ſomething correſponding hereto in them. When men form deſigns, they are indeed obliged to have one thing principally in view, and to ſacrifice ſubordinate matters to principal ones; but we muſt not carry this prejudice, taken from the narrow limits of our power and knowledge, to him who is infinite in them. All his ends centre in the ſame point, and are carried to their utmoſt perfection by one and the ſame means. Thoſe laws, ceremonies, and incidents, which

which beſt ſuited the *Jewiſh* ſtate, and the ſeveral individuals of it, were alſo moſt apt to prefigure the promiſed Meſſiah, and the ſtate of the chriſtian church, according to the perfect plan of theſe things, which, in our way of ſpeaking, exiſted in the divine mind from all eternity; juſt as that magnitude, ſituation, &c. of our earth, which beſt ſuits its preſent inhabitants, is alſo beſt ſuited to all the changes which it muſt hereafter undergo, and to all the inhabitants of other planets, if there be any ſuch, to whom its influence extends.

The following inſtance may perhaps make this matter more clearly underſtood. Suppoſe a perſon to have ten numbers, and as many lines, preſented to his view; and to find by menſuration, that the ten numbers expreſſed the lengths of the ten lines reſpectively. This would make it evident, that they were intended to do ſo. Nor would it alter the caſe, and prove that the agreement between the numbers and lines aroſe, without deſign, and by chance, as we expreſs it, to allege that theſe numbers had ſome other relations; that, for inſtance, they proceeded in arithmetical or geometrical progreſſion, were the ſquares or cubes of other numbers, &c. On the contrary, any ſuch remarkable property would rather increaſe than diminiſh the evidence of deſign in the agreement between the numbers and lines. However, the chief thing to be inquired into would plainly be, whether the agreement be too great to be accounted for by chance. If it be, deſign muſt be admitted.

PROP. XXXIII.

The Application of the Types and Prophecies of the Old Teſtament by the Writers of the New does not weaken the Authority of theſe Writers, but rather confirm it.

For the objections, which have been made to the writers of the New Teſtament on this head, have been grounded principally upon a ſuppoſition, that when an obvious literal ſenſe of a paſſage, or a manifeſt uſe of a ceremony, ſuited to the then preſent times, are diſcovered, all others are excluded, ſo as to become miſapplications. But this has been ſhewn in the laſt propoſition to be a prejudice ariſing from the narrowneſs of our faculties and abilities. Whence it follows, that, if the ſcripture types and prophecies be remarkably ſuited to different things, which is a point that is abundantly proved by learned men, they cannot but, in their original deſign, have various ſenſes and uſes. And it is ſome confirmation of the divine authority of the writers of the New Teſtament, that they write agreeably to this original deſign of God.

It may perhaps afford ſome ſatisfaction to the reader to make ſome conjectures concerning the light in which the types and prophecies, which have double ſenſes, would appear firſt to the ancient *Jews*, and then to thoſe who lived in the time of our Saviour. From hence we may judge in what light it is reaſonable they ſhould be taken by us.

Let our inſtance be the ſecond pſalm, which we are to ſuppoſe written by *David* himſelf, or, at leaſt, in the time of his reign. It is evident, that there are ſo many things in this pſalm peculiarly applicable to *David*'s aſcent to the throne by God's ſpecial appointment, to the oppoſition which he met with both in his own nation, and from the neighbouring

ones,

ones, and to his victories over all his oppoſers through the favour of God, that the *Jews* of that time could not but conſider this pſalm as relating to *David.* Nay, one can ſcarce doubt, but the Pſalmiſt himſelf, whether he ſeemed to himſelf to compoſe it from his own proper fund, or to have it dictated immediately by the ſpirit of God, would have *David* principally in view, At the ſame time it is evident, that there are ſome paſſages, particularly the laſt, *Bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him,* i. e. in the Son, which it would be impious, eſpecially for an *Iſraelite,* to apply to *David,* and which therefore no allowance for the ſublimity of the eaſtern poetry could make applicable. It may be ſuppoſed therefore, that many, or moſt, conſidered ſuch paſſages as having an obſcurity in them, into which they could no ways penetrate; whereas a few perhaps, who were peculiarly enlightened by God, and who meditated day and night upon the promiſes made to their anceſtors, particularly upon thoſe to *Abraham,* would preſume or conjecture, that a future perſon of a much higher rank than *David,* was prefigured thereby. And the caſe would be the ſame in regard to many other pſalms: they would appear to the perſons of the then preſent times both to reſpect the then preſent occurrences, and alſo to intimate ſome future more glorious ones; and would mutually ſupport this latter interpretation in each other.

When the prophets appeared in the declenſion and captivities of the kingdoms of *Iſrael* and *Judah,* the ſame interpretation would be ſtrengthened, and the expectations grounded thereon increaſed, by the plainer and more frequent declarations of the prophets concerning ſuch a future perſon, and the happineſs which would attend his coming. The great and various ſufferings of this choſen people, their return and deliverance, their having their ſcriptures collected into one view by *Ezra,* and read in

their ſynagogues during the interval from *Ezra* to Chriſt, the figurative ſenſes put upon dreams, viſions, and parables, in their ſcriptures, &c. would all concur to the ſame purpoſe, till at laſt it is reaſonable to expect, that the *Jews* in our Saviour's time would conſider many of the inſtitutions and ceremonies of their law, of the hiſtorical events, of the pſalms appointed for the temple-worſhip, and of the inſpired declarations of the prophets, as reſpecting the future times of the *Meſſiah*; and this, in ſome caſes, to the excluſion of the more obvious ſenſes and uſes, which had already taken place; being led thereto by the ſame narrow-mindedneſs, which makes ſome in theſe days reject the typical and more remote ſenſe, as ſoon as they ſee the literal and more immediate one. Now, that this was, in fact, the caſe of the *Jews* in the time of Chriſt, and for ſome time afterwards, appears from the New Teſtament, from the chriſtian writers of the firſt ages, and from the Talmudical ones.

A great part, however, of the ſcripture types and prophecies appeared to the *Jews* to have no relation to their promiſed *Meſſiah*, till they were interpreted by the event. They expected a perſon that ſhould correſpond to *David* and *Solomon*, two glorious princes; but they did not ſee how *Iſaac*, or the Paſchal Lamb, ſhould tipify him; or that the circumſtance of being called out of *Egypt*, the appellation of *Nazarene*, or the parting garments, and caſting lots upon a veſture, ſhould contribute to aſcertain him. However, it is certain, that to perſons who had for ſome time conſidered their ſcriptures in the typical, prophetical view mentioned in the laſt paragraph, every remarkable circumſtance and coincidence of this kind, verified by the event, would be a new acceſſion of evidence, provided we ſuppoſe a good foundation from miracles, or prophecies of undoubted import, to have been laid previouſly.

Nay,

Nay, ſuch coincidences may be conſidered not only as arguments to the *Jews* of Chriſt's time, but as ſolid arguments in themſelves, and that excluſively of the context. For though each of theſe coincidences ſingly taken, affords only a low degree of evidence, and ſome of them ſcarce any; yet it is a thing not to be accounted for from chance, that ſeparate paſſages of the Old Teſtament ſhould be applicable to the circumſtances of Chriſt's life, by an alluſion either of words or ſenſe, in ten or an hundred times a greater number, than to any other perſons, from mere accident. And this holds in a much higher degree, if the ſeparate paſſages or circumſtances be ſubordinate parts of a general type. Thus the parting the garments, the offering vinegar and gall, and the not breaking a bone, have much more weight, when it is conſidered, that *David*, and the Paſchal Lamb, are types of the *Meſſiah*. And when the whole evidence of this kind which the induſtry of pious chriſtians has brought to light in the firſt ages of chriſtianity, and again ſince the revival of letters, is laid together, it appears to me to be both a full proof of the truth of the chriſtian religion, and a vindication of the method of arguing from typical and double ſenſes.

It may be added in favour of typical reaſoning, that it correſponds to the method of reaſoning by analogy, which is found to be of ſuch extenſive uſe in philoſophy. A type is indeed nothing but an analogy, and the ſcripture types are not only a key to the ſcriptures, but ſeem alſo to have contributed to put into our hands the key of nature, analogy. And this ſhews us a new correſpondence or analogy between the word and works of God. However, ſince certain well-meaning perſons ſeem to be prejudiced againſt typical and double ſenſes, I will add ſome arguments, whereby the writers of the New Teſtament may be defended upon this footing alſo.

Firſt, then, Since the *Jews* in the times of the writers of the New Teſtament, and conſequently theſe writers themſelves, were much given to typical reaſonings, and the application of paſſages of the Old Teſtament in a ſecondary ſenſe to the times of the *Meſſiah*, this would be a common foundation for theſe writers, and thoſe to whom they wrote, to proceed upon, derived from aſſociation, and the acquired nature of their minds. And it is as eaſy to conceive, that God ſhould permit them to proceed upon this foundation for the then preſent time, though it would not extend to the world in general, to diſtant ages, and to perſons of different educations, as that they ſhould be left to the workings of their own acquired natures in many other reſpects, notwithſtanding the ſupernatural gifts beſtowed upon them in ſome; or as it is to conceive, that God ſhould confer any thing, exiſtence, happineſs, &c. in any particular manner or degree.

Secondly, There are ſome paſſages in the New Teſtament quoted from the Old in the way of mere alluſion. This cannot, I think, be true of many, where the paſſage is ſaid to be *fulfilled*, without doing violence to the natural ſenſe of the words, and of the context, in the New Teſtament: however, where it is, it entirely removes the objection here conſidered.

Thirdly, If we ſhould allow, that the writers of the New Teſtament were ſometimes guilty of erroneous reaſonings in theſe or other matters, ſtill this does not affect their moral characters at all; nor their intellectual ones, which are ſo manifeſt from the general ſoundneſs and ſtrength of their other reaſonings, in any ſuch manner as to be of importance in reſpect of the evidence for the general truth of the ſcriptures, or for their divine authority in the firſt and loweſt ſenſe above conſidered.

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PROP. XXXIV.

The moral Characters of Chriſt, the Prophets and Apoſtles, prove the Truth and Divine Authority of the Scriptures.

Let us begin with the conſideration of the character of Chriſt. This, as it may be collected from the plain narrations of the goſpels, is manifeſtly ſuperior to all other characters, fictitious or real, whether drawn by hiſtorians, orators, or poets. We ſee in it the moſt entire devotion and reſignation to God, and the moſt ardent and univerſal love to mankind, joined with the greateſt humility, ſelf-denial, meekneſs, patience, prudence, and every other virtue, divine and human. To which we are to add, that, according to the New Teſtament, Chriſt, being the Lord and creator of all, took upon himſelf the form of a ſervant, in order to ſave all; that, with this view, he ſubmitted to the helpleſſneſs and infirmities of infancy, to the narrowneſs of human underſtanding, and the perturbations of human affections, to hunger, thirſt, labour, wearineſs, poverty, and hardſhips of various kinds, to lead a ſorrowful, friendleſs life, to be miſunderſtood, betrayed, inſulted, and mocked, and at laſt to be put to a painful and ignominious death; alſo (which deſerves our moſt ſerious conſideration, however incongruous to our narrow apprehenſions it may appear at firſt ſight) to undergo the moſt bitter mental agony previouſly. Here then we may make the following obſervations.

Firſt, That, laying down the preſent diſorders of the moral world, and the neceſſity of the love of God and our neighbour, and of ſelf-annihilation, in order to the pure and ultimate happineſs of man, there ſeems to be a neceſſity alſo for a ſuffering Saviour. At leaſt, one may affirm, that the condeſcenſion of

Chriſt, in leaving the glory which he had with the Father before the foundation of the world, and in ſhewing himſelf a perfect pattern of obedience to the will of God, both in doing and ſuffering, has a moſt peculiar tendency to rectify the preſent moral depravity of our natures, and to exalt us thereby to pure ſpiritual happineſs. Now it is remarkable, that the evangeliſts and apoſtles ſhould have thus hit upon a thing, which all the great men amongſt the ancient heathens miſſed, and which however clear it does and ought now to appear to us, was a great ſtumbling-block to them, as well as to the *Jews*; the firſt ſeeking after wiſdom, *i. e.* human philoſophy and eloquence; and the laſt requiring a ſign, or a glorious temporal Saviour. Nor can this be accounted for, as it ſeems to me, but by admitting the reality of the character, *i. e.* the divine miſſion of Chriſt, and the conſequent divine inſpiration of thoſe who drew it, *i. e.* the truth and divine authority of the New Teſtament.

Secondly, If we allow only the truth of the common hiſtory of the New Teſtament, or even, without having recourſe to it, only ſuch a part of the character of Chriſt, as neither ancient nor modern *Jews*, heathens, or unbelievers, ſeem to conteſt, it will be difficult to reconcile ſo great a character, claiming divine authority, either with the moral attributes of God, or indeed with itſelf, upon the ſuppoſition of the falſehood of that claim. One can ſcarce ſuppoſe, that God would permit a perſon apparently ſo innocent and excellent, ſo qualified to impoſe upon mankind, to make ſo impious and audacious a claim without having ſome evident mark of impoſture ſet upon him; nor can it be conceived, how a perſon could be apparently ſo innocent and excellent, and yet really otherwiſe.

Thirdly, The manner in which the evangeliſts ſpeak of Chriſt, ſhews that they drew after a real copy,

copy, *i. e.* ſhews the genuineneſs and truth of the goſpel hiſtory. There are no direct encomiums upon him, no laboured defences or recommendations. His character ariſes from a careful impartial examination of all that he ſaid and did, and the evangeliſts appear to have drawn this greateſt of all characters without any direct deſign to do it. Nay, they have recorded ſome things, ſuch as his being moved with the paſſions of human nature, as well as being affected by its infirmities, which the wiſdom of this world would rather have concealed.' But their view was to ſhew him to the perſons to whom they preached as the promiſed *Meſſiah* of the *Jews*, and the Saviour of mankind; and as they had been convinced of this themſelves from his diſcourſes, actions, ſufferings, and reſurrection, they thought nothing more was wanting to convince ſuch others as were ſerious and impartial, but a ſimple narrative of what Jeſus ſaid and did. And if we compare the tranſcendent greatneſs of this character with the indirect manner in which it is delivered, and the illiterateneſs and low condition of the evangeliſts, it will appear impoſſible, that they ſhould have forged it, that they ſhould not have had a real original before them, ſo that nothing was wanting but to record ſimply and faithfully. How could mean and illiterate perſons excel the greateſt genioſes, ancient and modern, in drawing a character? How came they to draw it an indirect manner? This is indeed a ſtrong evidence of genuineneſs and truth; but then it is of ſo recluſe and ſubtle a nature, and, agreeably to this, has been ſo little taken notice of by the defenders of the chriſtian religion, that one cannot conceive the evangeliſts were at all aware, that it was an evidence. The character of Chriſt, as drawn by them, is therefore genuine and true; and conſequently proves his divine miſſion both by its tranſcendent excellence, and by his laying claim to ſuch a miſſion.

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Here it ought to be particularly remarked, that our Saviour's entire devotion to God, and ſufferings for the ſake of men in compliance with his will, is a pitch of perfection, which was never propoſed, or thought of, before his coming (much leſs attempted or attained); unleſs as far as this is virtually included in the precepts for loving God above all, and our neighbour as ourſelves, and other equivalent paſſages in the Old Teſtament.

We come, in the next place, to conſider the characters of the prophets, apoſtles, and other eminent perſons mentioned in the Old and New Teſtaments. Here then we may obſerve,

Firſt, That the characters of the perſons who are ſaid in the ſcriptures to have had divine communications, and a divine miſſion, are ſo much ſuperior to the characters which occur in common life, that we can ſcarce account for the more eminent ſingle ones, and therefore much leſs for ſo large a ſucceſſion of them, continued through ſo many ages, without allowing the divine communications and aſſiſtance, which they allege. It is true indeed, that many of theſe eminent perſons had conſiderable imperfections, and ſome of them were guilty of great ſins occaſionally, though not habitually. However, I ſpeak here of the balance, after proper deductions are made, on account of theſe ſins and imperfections; and leave it to the impartial reader to conſider, whether the prophets, apoſtles, &c. were not ſo much ſuperior, not only to mankind at an average, but even to the beſt men amongſt the *Greeks* and *Romans*, as is not fairly to be accounted for by the mere powers of human nature.

Secondly, If this ſhould be doubted, their characters are, however, far too good to allow the ſuppoſition of an impious fraud and impoſture; which muſt be the caſe, if they had not divine authority. We have therefore this double argument for the divine

divine authority of the ſcriptures, if we only allow the genuineneſs and truth of its common hiſtory.

Thirdly, The characters of the eminent perſons mentioned in the ſcriptures ariſe ſo much, in an indirect way, from the plain narrations of facts, their ſins and imperfections are ſo fully ſet forth by themſelves, or their friends, with their condemnation and puniſhment, and the vices of wicked men, and the oppoſers of God and themſelves, related in ſo candid a way, with all fit allowances, that we have in this a remarkable additional evidence for the truth of this part of the ſcripture hiſtory, beſides the common ones before given, which extend to the whole.

Fourthly, The eminent perſons here conſidered are ſometimes charged by unbelievers with crimes, where, all circumſtances being duly weighed, they did nothing unjuſtifiable, nothing more than it was their indiſpenſable duty to God to do; as *Abraham* in preparing to ſacrifice *Iſaac*, *Joſhua* in deſtroying the *Canaanites*, &c. We cannot determine an action to be ſinful from a mere, abſtracted, general definition of it, as that it is the taking away the life of a man, &c. but muſt carefully weigh all circumſtances. And indeed there are no maxims in morality that are quite univerſal; they can be no more than general; and it is ſufficient for human purpoſes, that they are ſo much, notwithſtanding that the addition of peculiar circumſtances makes the action vary from the general rule, Now the certain command of God may ſurely be ſuch a circumſtance.

Laſtly, The perfection of virtue being of an ever-growing infinite nature, it is reaſonable to expect, that mankind in its infant ſtate, ſoon after the flood, and ſo onwards for ſome time, ſhould be more imperfect, and have leſs of the pure and ſublime precepts concerning indifference to this world, and all preſent things, univerſal unlimited charity, mortification, abſtinence, chaſtity, &c. delivered to them, than

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we chriſtians have, and leſs expected from them. And yet, upon the whole, the patriarchs and eminent perſons among the *Jews* were *burning and ſhining lights* in their reſpective generations. However, it is alſo to be obſerved here, that the moſt ſublime precepts of the goſpel do appear from the firſt in the Old Teſtament, though under a veil; and that they were gradually opened more and more under the later prophets.

PROP. XXXV.

The Excellence of the Doctrine contained in the Scriptures is an Evidence of their Divine Authority.

THIS is an argument which has great force, independently of other conſiderations. Thus let us ſuppoſe, that the author of the goſpel which goes under St. *Matthew*'s name, was not known, and that it was unſupported by the writers of the primitive times; yet ſuch is the unaffected ſimplicity of the narrations, the purity of the doctrines, and the ſincere piety and goodneſs of the ſentiments, that it carries its own authority with it. And the ſame thing may be ſaid in general of all the books of the Old and New Teſtaments: ſo that it ſeems evident to me, that, if there was no other book in the world beſides the Bible, a man could not reaſonably doubt of the truth of revealed religion. *The mouth ſpeaks from the abundance of the heart.* Men's writings and diſcourſes muſt receive a tincture from their real thoughts, deſires, and deſigns. It is impoſſible to play the hypocrite in every word and expreſſion. This is a matter of common daily obſervation, that cannot be called in queſtion; and the more any one thinks upon it, or attends to what paſſes in himſelf or others, to the hiſtory of the human thoughts, words, and

and actions, and their neceſſary mutual connections, *i. e.* to the hiſtory of aſſociation, the more clearly will he ſee it. We may conclude therefore, even if all other arguments were ſet aſide, that the authors of the books of the Old and New Teſtaments, whoever they were, cannot have made a falſe claim to divine authority.

But there is alſo another method of inferring the divine authority of the ſcriptures from the excellence of the doctrine contained therein. For the ſcriptures contain doctrines concerning God, providence, a future ſtate, the duty of man, &c. far more pure and ſublime than can any ways be accounted for from the natural powers of men, ſo circumſtanced as the ſacred writers were. That the reader may ſee this in a clearer light, let him compare the ſeveral books of the Old and New Teſtaments with the cotemporary writers amongſt the *Greeks* and *Romans*, who could not have leſs than the natural powers of the human mind; but might have, over and above, ſome traditional hints derived ultimately from revelation. Let him conſider whether it be poſſible to ſuppoſe, that *Jewiſh* ſhepherds, fiſhermen, &c. ſhould, both before and after the riſe of the heathen philoſophy, ſo far exceed the men of the greateſt abilities and accompliſhments in other nations, by any other means, than divine communications. Nay, we may ſay, that no writers, from the invention of letters to the preſent times, are equal to the penmen of the books of the Old and New Teſtaments, in true excellence, utility, and dignity; which is ſurely ſuch an internal criterion of their divine authority, as ought not to be reſiſted. And perhaps it never is reſiſted by any, who have duly conſidered theſe books, and formed their affections and actions according to the precepts therein delivered.

An objection is ſometimes made againſt the excellence of the doctrines of the ſcriptures, by charging upon

upon them erroneous doctrines, eſtabliſhed by the authority of creeds, councils, and particular churches. But this is a manner of proceeding highly unreaſonable. The unbeliever, who pays ſo little regard to the opinions of others, as to reject what all churches receive, the divine miſſion of Chriſt, and the evidences for the truth of the ſcriptures, ought not at other times to ſuppoſe the churches, much leſs any particular one, better able to judge of the doctrine; but ſhould in the latter caſe, as well as the firſt, examine for himſelf; or, if he will take the doctrine upon truſt, he ought much rather to take the evidence ſo.

If it can be ſhewn, either that the true doctrine of the ſcriptures differs from that which is commonly received, or that reaſon teaches ſomething different from what is commonly ſuppoſed, or laſtly that we are inſufficient judges what are the real doctrines of ſcripture, or reaſon, or both, and conſequently that we ought to wait with patience for farther light, all objections of this kind fall to the ground. One may alſo add, that the ſame arguments which prove a doctrine to be very abſurd, prove alſo, for the moſt part, that it is not the ſenſe of the paſſage; and that this is a method of reaſoning always allowed in interpreting profane authors.

PROP. XXXVI.

The many and great Advantages which have accrued to the World from the Patriarchal, Judaical, *and* Chriſtian *Revelations, prove the Divine Authority of the Scriptures.*

THESE advantages are of two ſorts, relating reſpectively to the knowledge and practice of religion. I begin with the firſt.

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Now it is very evident, that the chriſtian revelation has diffuſed a much more pure and perfect knowledge of what is called natural religion, over a great part of the world, viz. wherever the profeſſion either of chriſtianity or mahometiſm prevails. And the ſame thing will appear, in reſpect of the *Judaical* and *patriarchal* revelations, to thoſe who are acquainted with ancient hiſtory. It will be found very difficult by ſuch perſons, to account even for the pagan religions without recurring to ſuch patriarchal communications with God, as are mentioned in the Pentateuch, and to the more full revelations made to the *Jews*. So that one is led to believe, that all that is good in any pagan or falſe religion, is of divine original; all that is erroneous and corrupt, the off-ſpring of the vanity, weakneſs, and wickedneſs of men; and that properly ſpeaking, we have no reaſon from hiſtory to ſuppoſe, that there ever was any ſuch thing as mere natural religion, *i. e.* any true religion, which men diſcovered to themſelves by the mere light of nature. Theſe poſitions ſeem to follow from inquiries into the antiquities of the heathen world, and of their religions. The heathen religions all appear to be of a derivative nature; each circumſtance in the inquiry confirms the ſcriptural accounts of things, and ſends us to the revelations expreſsly mentioned, or indirectly implied, in the Old Teſtament, for the real original of the pagan religions in their ſimple ſtate. This opinion receives great light and confirmation from Sir *Iſaac Newton*'s Chronology.

It appears alſo very probable to me, that a careful examination of the powers of human underſtanding would confirm the ſame poſition; and that admitting the novelty of the preſent world, there is no way of accounting for the riſe and progreſs of religious knowledge, as it has taken place in fact, without having recourſe to divine revelation. If we admit

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the *Patriarchal*, *Judaical*, and *Chriſtian* revelations, the progreſs of natural religion, and of all the falſe pretences to revelation, will fairly ariſe (at leaſt, appear poſſible in all caſes, and probable in moſt) from the circumſtances of things, and the powers of human nature; and the foregoing doctrine of aſſociation will caſt ſome light upon the ſubject. If we deny the truth of theſe revelations, and ſuppoſe the ſcriptures to be falſe, we ſhall caſt utter confuſion upon the inquiry, and human faculties will be found far unequal to the taſk aſſigned to them.

Secondly, If we conſider the practice of true religion, the good effects of revelation are ſtill more evident. Every man who believes, muſt find himſelf either excited to good, or deterred from evil, in many inſtances, by that belief; notwithſtanding that there may be many other inſtances, in which religious motives are too weak to reſtrain violent and corrupt inclinations. The ſame obſervations occur daily with regard to others, in various ways and degrees. And it is by no means concluſive againſt this obvious argument for the good effects of revelation upon the morals of mankind, to allege that the world is not better now, than before the coming of Chriſt. This is a point which cannot be determined by any kind of eſtimation, in our power to make; and, if it could, we do not know what circumſtances would have made the world much worſe than it is, had not chriſtianity interpoſed. However, it does appear to me very *probable*, to ſay the leaſt, that *Jews*, and *chriſtians*, notwithſtanding all their vices and corruptions, have, upon the whole, been always better than heathens and unbelievers. It ſeems to me alſo, that as the knowledge of true, pure, and perfect religion is advanced and diffuſed more and more every day, ſo the practice of it correſponds thereto: but then this, from the nature of the thing, is a fact of a leſs obvious kind; however, if it be true, it will

will become manifeſt in due time. Let us ſuppoſe a perſon to maintain, that civil government, the arts of life, medicines, &c. have never been of uſe to mankind, becauſe it does not appear from any certain calculation, that the ſum total of health and happineſs is greater among the polite nations, than among the barbarous ones. Would it not be thought a ſufficient anſwer to this, to appeal to the obvious good effects of theſe things in innumerable inſtances, without entering into a calculation impoſſible to be made? However, it does here alſo appear, that, as far as we are able to judge, civilized countries are, upon the whole, in a more happy ſtate than barbarous ones, in all theſe reſpects.

Now, as the divine original of revelation may be directly concluded from its being the ſole fountain of all religious knowledge, if that can be proved; ſo it will follow in an indirect way, if we ſuppoſe, that revelation has only promoted the knowledge and practice of true religion. It is not likely, that folly or deceit of any kind ſhould be eminently ſerviceable in the advancement of wiſdom and virtue. Every tree muſt produce its proper fruit. Enthuſiaſm and impoſture cannot contribute to make men prudent, peaceable and moderate, diſintereſted and ſincere.

PROP. XXXVII.

The wonderful Nature, and ſuperior Excellence, of the Attempt made by Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, are Evidences of their Divine Authority.

THIS attempt was that of reforming all mankind, and making them happy in a future ſtate. And, when we conſider firſt the attempt itſelf, and then the aſſurance of ſucceſs in it, which appears in all their words and actions, by ways both direct and

indirect, there ariſes from thence alone, a ſtrong preſumption in their favour, as well as in favour of the authors of the books of the Old Teſtament, who have concurred in the ſame attempt, though no leſs informed of the true nature and full extent of it. For ideas and purpoſes of this kind could ſcarce enter into the hearts of weak or wicked men; much leſs could ſuch perſons enter upon and proſecute ſo great an undertaking with ſuch prudence, integrity, and conſtancy, or form ſuch right judgments both of the oppoſition they ſhould meet with, and of the prevalence of their own endeavours, and thoſe of their ſucceſſors, over this oppoſition. Nay, one may ſay, that nothing leſs than ſupernatural aſſiſtance could qualify them for theſe purpoſes. No deſign of this kind was ever formed, or thought of, till the coming of Chriſt; and the pretences of enthuſiaſts and impoſtors to the ſame commiſſion ſince, have all been copied from Chriſt, as being neceſſary to their ſucceeding in any meaſure, ſince his coming. If it be ſuppoſed to be the true interpretation and meaning of the ſcriptures, to publiſh final redemption, converſion, and ſalvation to all mankind, even the moſt wicked, in ſome diſtant future ſtate, this will add great force to the preſent argument.

PROP. XXXVIII.

The Manner in which the Love of God, and of our Neighbour, is taught and inculcated in the Scriptures, is an Evidence of their Divine Authority.

For it appears, that the ſcriptures do virtually include, or even expreſsly aſſert, all that the modern philoſophy has diſcovered or verified concerning theſe important ſubjects; which degree of illumination, as it can with no plauſibility be accounted for in illiterate men

men in the time of *Auguſtus* from natural cauſes, ſo much leſs can it in the preceding times from Chriſt up to *Moſes*. This propoſition is included in the thirty-fifth: however, the ſubject of it is of ſo much importance, as to deſerve a ſeparate place.

Here then, Firſt, We may obſerve, that *Moſes* commands the *Iſraelites* to love God with all the heart, and ſoul, and might, whereas they are to love their neighbours only as themſelves. Now, though this infinite ſuperiority of the love due to God over that due to our neighbour be perfectly agreeable to that infinite majeſty and goodneſs of God, and nothingneſs of the creatures, which every new diſcovery in philoſophy now opens to view; yet it was ſo little known, many ages after *Moſes*, amongſt the wiſeſt of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, that we cannot aſcribe it to his mere natural ſagacity. The natural equality of all men, and the ſelf-annihilation, implied in the precept of loving *all* our brethren as well as ourſelves, are alſo the genuine dictates of true philoſophy.

Secondly, In order to ſhew the divine authority of the ſcriptures, from the manner in which the love of God is taught in them, we muſt conſider not only the direct precepts concerning this love, but alſo all thoſe concerning hope, truſt, fear, thankfulneſs, delight, &c. for all theſe concur to inculcate and beget in us the love of God. The ſame may be ſaid of all the ſcriptural deſcriptions of God, and his attributes, and of the addreſſes of good men to him, which are there recorded. God is declared in the ſcriptures to be light, love, goodneſs, the ſource of all happineſs and perfection, the father and protector of all, &c. And the eminent perſons who compoſed the Pſalms, and other ſuch like addreſſes to God, appear to have devoted themſelves entirely to him. Now, when we reflect, that there is ſcarce any thing of this kind in the writings of

the philoſophers who preceded Chriſt, and nothing comparable to the ſcripture expreſſions even in thoſe who came after him; when we farther reflect, that the writings of the ableſt and beſt men of the preſent times contain nothing excellent of the devotional kind, but what may be found in the ſcriptures, and even in the Old Teſtament; there ſeems to be a neceſſity for having recourſe to divine inſpiration, as the original ſource of this great degree of illumination in the patriarchs, prophets, and apoſtles.

Thirdly, Good perſons are, in the ſcriptures, ſtyled *children of God*; *members of Chriſt*; *partakers of the divine nature*; *one with God and Chriſt, as Chriſt is with God*; *members of each other*; *heirs of God, and coheirs with Chriſt*; *heirs of all things*, &c. Expreſſions which have the ſtrongeſt tendency to raiſe in us an unbounded love to God, and an equal one to our neighbour, and which include and convey the moſt exalted, and at the ſame time the moſt ſolid conceptions of this great ſyſtem of things. And if we ſuppoſe, that theſe high titles and privileges are, according to the ſcriptures, to be hereafter extended to all mankind, the divine original of the ſcriptures will receive a new acceſſion of evidence on this account.

PROP. XXXIX.

The Doctrine of the neceſſary Subſerviency of Pain to Pleaſure, unfolded in the Scriptures, is an Evidence of their divine Authority.

The ſcriptures give frequent and ſtrong intimations, that the ultimate happineſs which they promiſe, is not to be obtained in this our degenerate ſtate, but by a previous paſſage through pain. *Bleſſed are they that mourn. We muſt rejoice in tribulation. The palm-bearing multitude comes out of great tribulation.*

tribulation. The captain of our ſalvation, and therefore all his ſoldiers, muſt be *made perfect through ſufferings. Without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion of ſins. It is good for us to be afflicted, that we may learn to keep the commandments of God.* The *Jews* muſt be captivated, and undergo the ſevereſt afflictions, before they can be made happy finally, as the people of God. *Man muſt eat his bread in the ſweat of his brow* all his life, *and return to duſt* at laſt; and yet ſtill *the ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head*, and gain readmiſſion to *the tree of life, whoſe leaves ſhall heal the nations*, &c. &c. Now there is a ſurprizing correſpondence between ſuch expreſſions as theſe, and many modern diſcoveries, which ſhew that pain is, in general, introductory and ſubſervient to pleaſure; and particularly, that ſuch is the preſent frame of our natures, and conſtitution of the external world, which affects our organs, that we cannot be delivered from the ſenſuality and ſelfiſhneſs, that ſeize upon us at our firſt entrance into life, and advanced to ſpirituality and diſintereſtedneſs, to the love of God and our neighbour, we cannot have our wills broken, and our faculties exalted and purified, ſo as to reliſh happineſs wherever we ſee it, but by the perpetual correction and reformation of our judgments and deſires from painful impreſſions and aſſociations. And all philoſophical inquiries of this kind ſeem to caſt a peculiar light and evidence upon the ſcripture expreſſions before-mentioned, and to make their accuracy, and congruity with experience and obſervation, be much more plainly ſeen and felt.

PROP. XL.

The mutual Inſtrumentality of Beings to each other's Happineſs and Miſery, unfolded in the Scriptures, is an Argument of their Divine Authority.

To this head is to be referred all that the ſcriptures deliver concerning good and evil angels; Chriſt, the Lord of all, becoming the redeemer of all; *Adam*'s injuring all his poſterity through his frailty; *Abraham*'s becoming the father of the faithful, and all nations being bleſſed through him; the *Jews* being the keepers of the oracles of God, and of the true religion; tyrants being ſcourges in the hand of God; the fulneſs of the Gentiles being the occaſion of the final reſtoration of the *Jews*; and, in general, the doctrine that God prepares and diſpoſes of every thing ſo, as that nothing is for itſelf alone, but every perſon and nation has various relations to others, co-operates with them through Chriſt, who is *the head*, and through whom the *whole body being fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint ſupplieth, increaſeth and edifieth itſelf in love*, till *all things, both in heaven and earth*, arrive, in their ſeveral orders, to the *meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*. Now whoever compares theſe ſcripture expreſſions and doctrines with the various mutual relations, ſubſerviences, and uſes of the parts of the external world, heavenly bodies, meteors, elements, animals, plants, and minerals, to each other, cannot help ſeeing a wonderful analogy between the works of God and the ſcriptures, ſo wonderful as juſtly to entitle the laſt to the appellation of the word of God.

And thus we may perceive, that the ſcripture account of the fall of man, his redemption by Chriſt,

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and the influences exerted upon him by good and evil angels, is ſo far from affording an objection againſt the chriſtian religion, that it is a conſiderable evidence for it, when viewed in a truly philoſophical light. God works in every thing by means, by thoſe which, according to our preſent language and ſhort-ſightedneſs, are termed bad and unfit, as well as by the good and evidently fit ones; and all theſe means require a definite time, before they can accompliſh their reſpective ends. This occurs to daily obſervation in the courſe and conſtitution of nature. And the ſcripture doctrines concerning the fall, the redemption by Chriſt, and the influences of good and evil angels, are only ſuch intimations concerning the principal inviſible means that lead man to his ultimate end, happineſs in being united to God, as accelerate him in his progreſs thither. According to the ſcriptures, *Adam* hurts all, through frailty; Chriſt ſaves all, from his love and compaſſion to all; evil angels tempt, through malice; and good ones aſſiſt and defend, in obedience to the will of God, and his original and ultimate deſign of making all happy. Theſe things are indeed clothed in a conſiderable variety of expreſſions, ſuited to our preſent ways of acting, conceiving, and ſpeaking (which ways are, however, all of divine original, God having taught mankind, in the patriarchal times, the language, as one may ſay, in which he ſpake to them then and afterwards); but theſe expreſſions can have no greater real import, than that of ſignifying to us the means made uſe of by God; he being, according to the ſcriptures, as well as reaſon, the one only real agent in all the tranſactions that relate to man, to angels, &c. And to object to the method of producing happineſs by this or that means, becauſe of the time required to accompliſh the end, of the mixture of evil, &c. is to require, that all God's creatures ſhould at once be created infinitely happy, or rather have

exiſted ſo from all eternity, *i. e.* ſhould be *gods*, and not *creatures*.

PROP. XLI.

The Divine Authority of the Scriptures may be inferred from the ſuperior Wiſdom of the Jewiſh *Laws, conſidered in a political Light; and from the exquiſite Workmanſhip ſhewn in the Tabernacle and Temple.*

ALL theſe were originals amongſt the *Jews*, and ſome of them were copied partially and imperfectly by ancient heathen nations. They ſeem alſo to imply a knowledge ſuperior to the reſpective times. And I believe, that profane hiſtory gives ſufficient atteſtation to theſe poſitions. However, it is certain from ſcripture, that *Moſes* received the whole body of his laws, alſo the pattern of the tabernacle, and *David* the pattern of the temple, from God; and that *Bezaleel* was inſpired by God for the workmanſhip of the tabernacle. Which things, being laid down as a ſure foundation, may encourage learned men to inquire into the evidences from profane hiſtory, that the knowledge and ſkill to be found amongſt the *Jews* were ſuperior to thoſe of other nations at the ſame period of time, *i. e.* were ſupernatural.

PROP. XLII.

The Want of Univerſality in the Publication of Revealed Religion is no Objection to it; but, on the Contrary, the Time and Manner, in which the Scriptures were written, and delivered to the World, are Arguments for their Divine Authority.

HERE I obſerve,

Firſt, That objections of this kind ought never to be admitted againſt hiſtorical evidence; and, in fact,

fact, are not, upon other ſubjects. It is evident, as was obſerved in the beginning of this chapter, that to allow the truth of the ſcripture hiſtory, is to allow the truth of the chriſtian religion. Now it is very foreign to the purpoſe of an inquiry into the truth of the ſcripture hiſtory, to allege that it has not been made known to all mankind, in all ages, and under all circumſtances of each individual. It muſt require much abſtracted and ſubtle reaſoning, and ſuch as can never be put in competition with plain hiſtorical evidence, to connect this objection with the propoſition objected to. This is therefore, at leaſt, a ſtrong preſumption againſt the validity of ſuch an objection.

Secondly, This objection ſeems to derive its whole force from ſuch poſitions relating to the moral attributes of God, as make it neceſſary for us to ſuppoſe, either that he deals with all his creatures at preſent in an equally favourable manner, or, at leaſt, that nothing ſhall be ultimately wanting to their happineſs. Now the firſt ſuppoſition appears, upon the moſt tranſient view which we take of things, to be utterly falſe. There are differences of all degrees at preſent, in reſpect of all the good things which God has given us to enjoy; and therefore may be in the beſt of all good things, revealed religion. And indeed, if it was otherwiſe in reſpect of revealed religion, one ſtrong argument in its favour would be wanting, viz. its analogy with the courſe of nature. The moral attributes of God are to be deduced from obſervations made upon the courſe of nature. If therefore the tenor of revelation be agreeable to that of nature, it muſt be ſo to the moral attributes of God. But if any one ſuppoſes, in the ſecond place, that, notwithſtanding preſent and apparent differences in the circumſtances of God's creatures, there are no real and ultimate ones; at leaſt, that the balance will ultimately be in favour of each individual finitely, or

perhaps

perhaps infinitely; I anſwer, that this ſuppoſition is as agreeable to revelation as to natural reaſon; that there are as probable evidences for it in the word of God, as in his works, there being *no acceptance of perſons with God, no difference between the Jew and the Gentile*, according to the ſcriptures; and that we may infer as ſtrongly from the ſcriptures, that Chriſt will ſave all, as it can be inferred from philoſophy, that all will be made happy in any way; both which poſitions I ſhall endeavour to eſtabliſh hereafter, with the mutual illuſtrations and confirmations, which theſe glorious doctrines of natural and revealed religion afford to each other. And the gradual diffuſion of the *Patriarchal, Judaical*, and *Chriſtian* revelations, compared with the prophecies relating to the future kingdom of Chriſt, and with the preſent circumſtances of things, will afford great ſatisfaction and joy to every pious, benevolent perſon, who inquires into this ſubject. Theſe conſiderations will incline him to believe, that the goſpel will, ſooner or later, be preached to *every creature in heaven, in earth, under the earth*, &c. and not only preached, but received, obeyed, and made the means of unſpeakable happineſs to them. And thus this objection will be removed not only in ſpeculation, and according to reaſon, but in fact, from the preſent unhappy objectors; and *they will look on him whom they have pierced.*

Thirdly, Having ſhewn that a gradual and partial promulgation is not inconſiſtent with the ſuppoſition of a true revelation, we may farther affirm, that the particular time and manner, in which the ſeveral *Patriarchal, Judaical*, and *Chriſtian* revelations have been publiſhed to the world, are even arguments in their favour. This ſubject has been well handled by various learned men, particularly by Mr. *Arch. Law*, in his conſiderations on the ſtate of the world, &c. Theſe gentlemen have ſhewn, that, *cæteris manentibus*, which

which is in theſe things always to be previouſly allowed, the diſpenſations recorded in the ſcriptures have been, as far as we can judge, perfectly ſuited to the ſtates of the world at the times when theſe diſpenſations were made reſpectively, *i. e.* to the improvement of mankind in knowledge ſpeculative and practical, to their wants, and to their ability to profit in moral accompliſhments; ſo that if we ſuppoſe either much more, or much leſs, light to have been afforded to mankind in a ſupernatural way (*cæteris manentibus*; and particularly their voluntary powers over their affections and actions, or free-will in the practical ſenſe, remaining the ſame), their advancement in moral perfection, in voluntary obedience to, and pure love of God, would probably have been leſs: which ſuitableneſs of each revelation to the time when it was made, and to the production of the *maximum* of moral perfection, is an argument for the ſyſtem of revelation, of the ſame kind with thoſe for the goodneſs of God, which are drawn from the mutual fitneſſes of the finite and imperfect parts of the natural world to each other, and to the production of the *maximum*, or greateſt poſſible quantity of happineſs.

PROP. XLIII.

The Excluſion of all great Degrees of Enthuſiaſm and Impoſture from the Characters of Chriſt, the Prophets and Apoſtles, proves their Divine Authority.

THAT Chriſt, the prophets and apoſtles, cannot be charged with any great degrees of enthuſiaſm or impoſture, ſeems allowed by many unbelievers; and is evident from the firſt view of their diſcourſes and writings, and of hiſtory ſacred and profane. We might ſay, that much more is evident. However, for

for the preſent, let us only ſuppoſe all great degrees of enthuſiaſm and impoſture excluded, and inquire how far their divine miſſion may be inferred from that ſuppoſition.

Firſt, then, If all great degrees of enthuſiaſm be excluded, Chriſt, the prophets and apoſtles, muſt know whether or no they were under the influence of the divine ſpirit, ſo as to propheſy, ſpeak, and interpret languages, which they had never learnt, and work miracles. Indeed to ſuppoſe them not capable of diſtinguiſhing theſe powers in themſelves and each other, is to charge them with downright madneſs.

Secondly, Since then they claimed theſe powers every where, as the ſeal of their commiſſion from God; if they had them not, *i. e.* if they had not divine authority, they muſt be impoſtors, and endeavour to deceive the world knowingly and deliberately. And this impoſture, whether we conſider the affront offered to God, or the injury done to mankind, or its duration, its audaciouſneſs, &c. would be the deepeſt and blackeſt that has ever appeared in the world. It is therefore excluded by ſuppoſition; and conſequently, ſince a leſs degree will not account for a falſe claim to divine authority, we muſt allow, that Chriſt, the prophets, and apoſtles, made a true one.

Thirdly, Let it be obſerved, that though cautious unbelievers do not venture to charge Chriſt, the prophets and apoſtles, either with groſs enthuſiaſm, or abandoned impoſture; in expreſs terms; yet they find themſelves obliged to inſinuate both in all their attacks upon revealed religion: which is, in effect, to acknowledge the truth of the preſent propoſition; for it is the ſame thing, as to acknowledge, that both the charge of groſs enthuſiaſm, and that of abandoned impoſture, are neceſſary to ſupport the objections againſt revealed religion. Now, as neither charge, ſingly taken, can be maintained; ſo both

together

together are inconſiſtent. Groſs enthuſiaſm does not admit that conſtant caution, and cool diſpaſſionate cunning, which abandoned impoſture ſuppoſes and requires in order to ſucceed.

PROP. XLIV.

The Reception which Chriſt, his Forerunners and Followers with their Doctrines, have met with in all Ages, is an Argument of their Divine Authority.

THIS evidence does, as it were, embrace all the others, and give a particular force to them. For it will be a ſtrong confirmation of all the evidences for the *Jewiſh* and chriſtian religions, if we can ſhew, that the perſons to whom they have been offered, have been influenced by them as much as there was reaſon to expect, admitting them to be true; and far more than could be expected, on ſuppoſition that they were falſe. The moſt illuſtrious inſtance of this, is the victory which the chriſtian miracles and doctrines, with the ſufferings of our Saviour, and his followers, gained over the whole powers, firſt, of the *Jewiſh* ſtate, and then of the *Roman* empire, in the primitive times. For here all ranks and kinds of men, princes, prieſts, *Jewiſh* and heathen, philophers, populace, with all their aſſociated prejudices, from cuſtom and education, with all their corrupt paſſions and luſts, with all the external advantages of learning, power, riches, honour, and, in ſhort, with every thing but truth, endeavoured to ſuppreſs the progreſs that Chriſt's religion made every day in the world; but were unable to do it. Yet ſtill the evidence was but of a limited nature; it required to be ſet forth, atteſted, and explained, by the preacher, and to be attended to, and reflected upon, with ſome degree of impartiality,

tiality, by the hearer: and therefore, though the progreſs of it was quick, and the effect general, yet they were not inſtantaneous and univerſal. However, it is very evident, that any fraud, or falſe pretence, muſt ſoon have yielded to ſo great an oppoſition ſo circumſtanced.

The efficacy which the chriſtian doctrine then had in reforming the lives of many thouſands, is here to be conſidered as a principal branch of this argument, it being evidently the moſt difficult of all things, to convert men from vicious habits to virtuous ones, as every one may judge from what he feels in himſelf, as well as from what he ſees in others; and whatever does this, cannot, as it ſeems to me, but come from God. The falſe religions, and various corruptions of the true, which have from time to time appeared in the world, have been enabled to do this in the imperfect manner in which they have done it, merely, as it ſeems to me, from that mixture of important truths, and good motives, which they have borrowed from real revelations, *Patriarchal*, *Judaical*, and *Chriſtian*.

In like manner, as the propagation of chriſtianity, upon its firſt appearance in the world, evinces its divine original, ſo does the progreſs it has ſince made, and the reception which it meets with at preſent, amongſt the ſeveral ranks and orders of men. The detail of this would run out to a great length. It may, however, be of ſome uſe, juſt to obſerve, that, notwithſtanding the great prevalence of infidelity in the preſent times, it is ſeldom found to conſiſt with an accurate knowledge of ancient hiſtory, ſacred and profane, and never with an exalted piety and devotion to God.

And it is as peculiarly for the credit of chriſtianity, that it ſhould now be ſupported by the learned, as that it was firſt propagated by the unlearned; and an inconteſtable evidence for it, as appears to me, that

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it has been univerſally embraced by all eminently pious perſons, to whom it has been made known in a proper manner.

The analogous obſervations may be made upon the reception which the *Jewiſh* religion met with both from the *Jews* themſelves, and from the neighbouring nations. It ſeems impoſſible for *Moſes* to have delivered the *Jews* from their oppreſſion in *Egypt*, and afterwards to have ſubjected them to his laws, for *Joſhua* to have conquered *Canaan*, for the religion to have ſubſiſted in the ſucceeding times of the judges and kings, for the prieſts and prophets to have maintained their authority, for the people to have returned, after their captivity, with their religion in an uncorrupted ſtate, and to have ſupported it and themſelves againſt the kings of *Syria* and *Egypt*, and the power of the *Romans*, and to remain at this day a ſeparate people diſperſed all over the world, according to the prophecies, unleſs the miraculous part of the hiſtory of the Old Teſtament be allowed to be true, as well as the other.

PROP. XLV.

The Reception which falſe Religions have met with in the World, are Arguments of the Truth of the Chriſtian.

I WILL here make a few ſhort remarks,

Firſt, Upon the polytheiſtical, idolatrous religions of the ancient world.

Secondly, Upon the religious inſtitutions of *Zoroaſter*.

Thirdly, upon the impoſture of *Mahomet*.

Fourthly, Upon the enthuſiaſtical ſects, which have appeared from time to time amongſt chriſtians.

All theſe ſeem to have met with ſuch ſucceſs, as might be expected from the mixture of truth and falſehood

falſehood in them, compared with the then circumſtances of things. They are therefore indirect evidences for the truth of the chriſtian religion, ſince this has met with ſuch ſucceſs, as cannot be reconciled to the circumſtances of things, unleſs we ſuppoſe it true.

And, Firſt, The ancient pagan religions ſeem evidently to be the degenerated offspring of the patriarchal revelations; and ſo far to have been true, as they taught a God, a providence, a future ſtate, ſupernatural communications made to particular perſons, eſpecially in the infancy of the world, the preſent corruption of man, and his deviation from a pure and perfect way, the hopes of a pardon, a mediatorial power, the duties of ſacrifice, prayer, and praiſe, and the virtues of prudence, temperance, juſtice, and fortitude. They were falſe, as they mixed and polluted theſe important truths with numberleſs fables, ſuperſtitions, and impieties. That degree of truth, and moral excellence, which remained in them, was a principal cauſe of their ſucceſs, and eaſy propagation, among the people; for their moral ſenſe would direct them to approve and receive what was fit and uſeful. And, had the people of thoſe times penetrated ſufficiently into the powers of the human mind, they might have concluded, that religious truths could not be of human invention. However, as the impreſſions, which the hiſtorical and prophetical evidences for the patriarchal revelations had made upon mankind, were not yet obliterated; they believed, upon the authority of tradition, that all important knowledge, eſpecially in ſacred matters, was of divine original.

As to the miracles ſaid to be wrought upon certain occaſions in pagan nations, we may make theſe two remarks: Firſt, That the evidence for theſe is far inferior to that for the *Jewiſh* and chriſtian miracles; ſo that theſe may be true, though thoſe be falſe.

Secondly,

Secondly, That we are not ſufficiently informed of the ways of providence, to infer that God did not permit, or cauſe, ſome miracles to be wrought, even in times and places, where great corruption prevailed. Divine communications and miracles were probably moſt common ſoon after the flood, in the infancy of mankind: afterwards, as they advanced towards adult age, theſe ſupernatural interpoſitions grew more rare, (unleſs upon ſingular occaſions, as upon the publication of the law by *Moſes*, and of the goſpel by Chriſt; at which times, many and great miracles ſucceeded each other at ſhort intervals, in order to command awe, attention, and belief); and it may be, that they ceaſed in the pagan world for ſome ages before Chriſt: or it may be otherwiſe; and that, in rare and extraordinary caſes, the hand of God appeared in a miraculous manner. Analogy favours the laſt opinion, as it ſeems to me; which alſo appears to be more countenanced by hiſtory, than the contrary one; and yet the pretences to miracles amongſt the pagans were undoubtedly falſe, in the general.

I come, in the ſecond place, to conſider the religious inſtitutions of *Zoroaſter*. We have not ſo full and authentic an hiſtory of theſe, as to compare them properly with the *Jewiſh* or chriſtian revelations. If we ſuppoſe, that *Zoroaſter* and *Hyſtaſpes* ſet up the worſhip of one God, in a ſimple manner, teaching and inculcating the practice of virtue at the ſame time, this religion may be ſaid to have conſiderable moral evidence in its favour. If, farther, we ſuppoſe it to be in part derived, either from the deſcendents of *Abraham* by *Keturah*, called *Brachmans* from him, or from that knowledge of the true God, which the ten tribes, and the *Jews*, had then communicated to that part of the world, it will become an evidence for the *Jewiſh* religion.

Thirdly, The religion of *Mahomet* allows and preſuppoſes the truth of the *Jewiſh* and chriſtian. Its rapid propagation was owing chiefly to the mixture of political intereſts. That part of its doctrines, which is good, is manifeſtly taken from the ſcriptures; and this contributed to its ſucceſs. However, a compariſon of mahometiſm with chriſtianity, in the ſeveral particulars of each, ſeems to ſhew, that whenever a ſtrict examination is made into the hiſtory of mahometiſm by its profeſſors, the falſehood of it will quickly be made evident to them. It could not ſtand ſuch a trial, as chriſtianity has, ſince the revival of learning in theſe weſtern parts.

It ſeems eaſy to apply what has been delivered in the three laſt paragraphs to the analogous particulars of the religion of *Confucius*, and of other religions found in the *Eaſt* and *Weſt Indies*, as far as their hiſtories are ſufficiently full and authentic for that purpoſe.

Laſtly, One may make the following remarks, with reſpect to the ſeveral enthuſiaſtic ſects, that ariſe from time to time amongſt chriſtians.

Firſt, That their pretences to miracles and prophecies have, in general, been detected and expoſed, after ſome examination and inquiry; unleſs the ſect has begun to decline from other cauſes, before a ſtrict examination became neceſſary.

Secondly, That their pretended miracles were not of that evident kind, nor done in the ſame open manner, &c. as the *Jewiſh* and chriſtian miracles.

Thirdly, That theſe pretended miracles have not produced laſting effects upon the minds of men, like the *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian*. Now, though a religion may ſucceed for a time without true miracles, yet it ſeems hard to believe, that any ſhould fail with them.

Fourthly, The ſucceſs of ſects has, in general, been owing to their making greater pretences to purity, and goſpel perfection, than eſtabliſhed churches,

and

and to their both teaching and practiſing ſome neceſſary duties, which eſtabliſhed churches have too much neglected in the corrupted ſtate of chriſtianity. And in this light they have been true in part, and have done the moſt important ſervice to the world. Every ſect of chriſtians has magnified ſome great truth, not above its real value, but above the value which other ſects have ſet upon it; and by this means each important religious truth has had the advantage of being ſet in a full light by ſome party or other, though too much neglected by the reſt. And the true catholic church and communion of ſaints unites all theſe ſects, by taking what is right from each, and leaving the errors, falſehoods, and corruptions of each to combat and deſtroy one another.

And it may be, that mankind will be able in future generations to ſee, how every other ſect, and pretence to revelation, beſides thoſe of enthuſiaſtic chriſtians, in whatever age or country it has appeared, has been, all other things remaining the ſame, ſuited in the beſt poſſible manner, both to particular and general purpoſes; and that each has prepared the way, in its proper place, for that more complete ſtate predicted in the ſcriptures under the titles of *the kingdom of heaven*, and *of righteouſneſs*, *of the New Jeruſalem*, &c. Even infidelity, atheiſm, and ſcepticiſm, have their uſe. The veſſels of wrath are ſtill veſſels belonging to the Maker and Lord of all things, and anſwering his infinitely beneficent purpoſes. *Offences muſt come*, though *woe be to thoſe, by whom they come!* Each ſect, and pretence, and objection, has given, or will give, way in its time. The true and pure religion of Chriſt alone grows more evident and powerful from every attack that is made upon it, and converts the bitterneſs and poiſon of its adverſaries into nouriſhment for itſelf, and an univerſal remedy for the pains and ſorrows of a miſerable, degenerate world.

CHAP. III.

Of the RULE *of* LIFE.

HAVING delivered in the two foregoing chapters, the reſpective evidences for natural and revealed religion, I proceed now to inquire into the rule of life enjoined by them. This, it is evident, muſt be compliance with the will of God. Both natural and revealed religion teach this at firſt view; which is alſo the immediate dictate of rational ſelf-intereſt. It is farther evident, that the love of God, and of our neighbour, with moderation in all ſelfiſh enjoyments, muſt be the will of him, who is infinitely benevolent, *i. e.* in the popular phraſe, infinitely holy, merciful, juſt, and true, who has ſent us into this world to make ourſelves and others happy. This we may learn from natural religion, and the ſcriptures abound every where with the ſame precepts. I propoſe therefore, in this chapter, to enter into the detail of theſe precepts, and to apply them to the ſeveral particular circumſtances of human life, digeſting what I have to offer, under the heads of the ſeven kinds of pleaſure and pain, whoſe hiſtory I have given in the foregoing part of this work. But firſt I will, in the four propoſitions that follow next, premiſe an argument in favour of virtue, which ought to have ſome weight, as it ſeems to me, even with an atheiſt or ſceptic.

SECT.

SECT. I.

OF THE RULE OF LIFE, AS DEDUCIBLE FROM THE PRACTICE AND OPINIONS OF MANKIND.

PROP. XLVI.

The Practice of Mankind affords a Direction, which, though an imperfect one, may, however, be of some Use in our Inquiry after the Rule of Life.

THIS follows, First, Because, in all the subordinate arts of life, we always pay great regard to the common judgment, practice, and experience of mankind, taken at an average, as one may say. And this is thought to be more particularly requisite for those persons to do, who are ignorant and novices in respect of these arts. Now what is reasonable in the inferior arts, must also be reasonable in the art of arts, that of living happily, of attaining our *summum bonum*, or greatest possible happiness, here and hereafter, if there be an hereafter; which there may be, even consistently with atheism and scepticism. There seems therefore a peculiar obligation, from self-interest at least, upon atheists and sceptics, since they must live here upon the same terms as other men, and stand the same chance for an hereafter, to pay some deference to the practice of others, considered as an hint and caution how to secure their own interest.

Secondly, Mankind are evidently endued with a desire of attaining happiness, and avoiding misery: and arrive at a competent knowledge of the means, which lead to this end. I have, in the foregoing

part of this work, endeavoured to ſhew how this deſire and knowledge are generated. But the fact is certain and obvious, whether that account be ſatisfactory or no.

Thirdly, Thoſe who admit a benevolent author of nature, in any ſenſe of theſe words, will be inclined to believe, that mankind muſt in ſome degree be fitted to attain happineſs; and alſo, in conſequence thereof, attain it in fact. And even atheiſtical and ſceptical perſons, when they ſee how blind fate, or nature, or whatever term elſe they think fit to uſe, gives to all animals appetites, inſtincts, and objects, in general, ſuited to their well-being, ought, from an argument of induction, to expect ſomething analogous to this in mankind, previouſly to their inquiry into the fact.

It appears therefore, that the practice of mankind, taken at an average, may be of ſome uſe to us in our inveſtigation of the rule of life; and, yet theſe ſame conſiderations ſhew, that the light thereby afforded can be no more than a very imperfect one. The error, irregularity, and miſery, which are every where conſpicuous, prove at once, that the practice of mankind is no infallible guide.

PROP. XLVII.

The Opinions of Mankind afford an imperfect Direction in reſpect of the Rule of Life, which is preferable to that drawn from their Practice.

That the opinions of mankind, concerning the means of obtaining happineſs, are both of real uſe, and yet an imperfect rule in many reſpects, will appear, if we apply the reaſoning uſed in the foregoing propoſition to them.

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That this imperfect rule is, however, preferable to that drawn from the mere practice, follows, inaſmuch as the opinions of mankind are, in general, formed after experience, and often upon mature deliberation, when they are free from the violent impulſes of their appetites and paſſions, and at a more proper and equal diſtance from the objects under conſideration, than can well be at the time of action.

PROP. XLVIII.

The Rule of Life drawn from the Practice and Opinions of Mankind, taken at an Average, is favourable to the Cauſe of Virtue.

I WILL firſt conſider the rule ſuppoſed to be taken from the mere practice of mankind.

Now it appears at firſt ſight, that this rule would exclude all eminent degrees both of virtue and vice. A perſon who ſhould be ſimilar to the whole aggregate of mankind, conſidered as one great individual, would have ſome ſeeds and ſhoots of every virtue, and every vice, and yet none in an eminent degree: his virtues and vices would only exert themſelves, when called forth by ſtrong motives and occaſions: in which caſes, however, this fictitious perſon, this type and repreſentative of the whole ſpecies would not fail to ſhew, that he had all kinds of good and bad diſpoſitions, all balancing and reſtraining one another, unleſs where extraordinary incidents turn the ſcale in favour of each particular reſpectively: ſo that, if the mere practice of mankind ſhould be thought ſufficient to ground a rule upon, we ſhould be directed by this to avoid all great degrees both of virtue and vice, and to keep our appetites and paſſions in ſubjection to one another, ſo as that none ſhould prevail over the reſt, unleſs upon particular

extraordinary occaſions. And a perſon, formed according to this model, would be reckoned a neutral, moderate, prudent man, not much loved or hated by thoſe with whom he converſed; however, reſpected and regarded, rather than otherwiſe. We may alſo ſuppoſe, that his life would be much chequered with happineſs and miſery; and yet, for the moſt part, be void of all high degrees of either; upon the whole, probably rather happy, than miſerable. And thus the practice of mankind would, as it appears to me, lead to a low degree both of virtue and happineſs, and exclude all that violence and exorbitancy of paſſion and appetite, which is one chief ſource and occaſion of vice. For almoſt all kinds of vice are the exceſſes, and monſtrous offſprings, of natural appetites; whereas the virtues are, in general, of a moderate nature, and lie between the two extremes. That moderation therefore, which the practice of mankind, taken ſo as to make the oppoſite extremes balance each other, directs us to, muſt, upon the whole, be more favourable to virtue than to vice.

Let us next inquire to what rule of life the opinions of mankind would lead us, or how far the ſeveral virtues or vices are generally eſteemed to conduce to happineſs or miſery. Now, as the general practice of mankind excludes all groſs vices, ſo does the general opinion, but in a ſtronger manner. It does alſo exclude all eminent virtues; but then it does this in a weaker manner than the general practice; and, upon the whole, it turns the ſcale greatly in favour of virtue, and againſt vice, as means of private happineſs; as will immediately appear, if we conſider the particular virtues and vices of temperance and intemperance, meekneſs and anger, beneficence and avarice, gratitude and ingratitude, &c. as oppoſed to, and put in competition with, each other, in the judgement of mankind. And yet it does not ſeem by any means, that, according to the general

opinion

opinion of mankind, the greateſt degree of virtue has the faireſt proſpect for happineſs in this world.

But then, with reſpect to that other world, for which there is at leaſt this preſumption of general opinion, we have almoſt an univerſal conſent, of all ages and nations, that all degrees of virtue and vice will there meet with their proper and proportional reward and puniſhment. Now an impartial ſceptic muſt either enter the liſts, and fairly conſider what arguments there are for or againſt a future ſtate, and reaſon upon the ſubject, *i. e.* ceaſe to be a ſceptic; or elſe this general opinion of mankind, in favour of a future ſtate muſt, for the mechanical reaſons alleged in the firſt part of this work, give ſome degree of determination to him here, as in other caſes, where the mind is perfectly *in æquilibrio*. For the ſame reaſons, the almoſt univerſal conſent of mankind in the ſuperior advantages of virtue in a future ſtate, by them ſuppoſed, ought to have ſome weight with ſuch a perſon, even though he ſhould ſtill remain *in æquilibrio*, as to the opinion of a future ſtate, becauſe then it would be as probable as the other ſide of the queſtion.

And, upon the whole, we may make the following concluſions.

1. That a perſon who ſhould form his life partly upon the practice of mankind, and partly upon their opinions, would incline conſiderably to the ſide of virtue.

2. That, if he thought the rule drawn from the opinions of mankind preferable to that drawn from their practice, according to the laſt propoſition, he muſt incline more to the ſide of virtue.

3. That, if the future ſtate, which commences at the expiration of this life, be ſuppoſed of indefinitely more value than it, and certain, he ought to adhere ſtrictly to virtue, and renounce all vice. And the concluſion will be the ſame, though there be only a

ſtrong,

ſtrong, or a moderate probability, or even an equal chance, nay, I might almoſt ſay, a bare poſſibility, of the reality, and great importance, of a future life; ſince what he would forfeit in this life by a ſtrict adherence to virtue, is confeſſedly of ſmall importance in common caſes.

4. That all great degrees of vice are contrary to the common ſenſe, practice, and experience of mankind.

5. And therefore, laſtly, If a man gives himſelf up to vicious courſes, pretending cool rational ſcepticiſm and uncertainty in religious matters, he muſt either deceive himſelf, or endeavour to impoſe upon others. A perſon who lay entirely afloat, would from the ſuſceptibility of infection, allowed by all, and above explained from our frame, ſuffer himſelf to be formed by the practices and opinions of mankind at an everage, *i. e.* would incline to the ſide of virtue: and therefore a perſon who inclines the contrary way, muſt be drawn aſide from the neutral point of ſcepticiſm by ſecret prejudices and paſſions.

It may be objected to the reaſoning uſed in the former part of this propoſition, that whatever be the opinions of mankind, their practice at an average is by no means at an equal diſtance from perfect virtue, and groſs vice; but approaches much nearer to the latter extreme: and that this appears both from the obſervation of the facts, and from the declarations of the ſcriptures.

Firſt, then, Let us conſider the obſervation of the facts. And here the objectors will be ready to heap together the many inſtances of violence, revenge, cruelty, injuſtice, ingratitude, treachery, want of natural affection, brutal ſenſuality, anger, envy, moroſeneſs, ambition, avarice and ſelfiſhneſs, which hiſtory and experience, public and private, are able to furniſh; and will urge, that a perſon who ſhould copy after mankind taken at a medium, would be a very ſenſual,

ſenſual, ſelfiſh, malevolent, and every way vicious creature. And it muſt be confeſſed, nay, I am ſo far from denying, that I every where ſuppoſe, and lay down as a principle, that there is much corruption and wickedneſs all over the world. But that the moral evil in the world exceeds the moral good, would be very difficult to prove.

For, Firſt, How ſhall we make the computation? Who ſhall ſum up for us all the inſtances of the foregoing and other vices, and weigh them in a juſt balance againſt the contrary inſtances of love to relations, friends, neighbours, ſtrangers, enemies, and the brute creation; of temperance and chaſtity, generoſity, gratitude, compaſſion, courage, humility, piety, reſignation, &c? The caſe between the virtues and the vices, *i. e.* between moral good and evil, ſeems to reſemble that between pleaſure and pain, or natural good and evil. The inſtances of pleaſure are, in general, more numerous, but leſs in quantity, than thoſe of pain; and though it is impoſſible to ſpeak with certainty, becauſe no man can be qualified to make the eſtimate, yet pleaſure ſeems to prevail upon the whole. In like manner, the inſtances of benevolence of ſome kind or other, though mixed with many imperfections, of a partial ſelf-government, of a ſuperſtitious, enthuſiaſtic, idolatrous, or lukewarm piety, one or other, occur in almoſt all the moſt familiar circumſtances of human life, and intermix themſelves with the moſt common, ordinary thoughts, words, and actions: whereas the inſtances of ſenſuality, malevolence, and profaneneſs, are rarer, as it ſeems, though often of a more glaring nature.

Secondly, The imperfection of virtue, which I allow, and even lay down in mankind in general, makes them, in general, apt to magnify the vices of others. Perfect virtue may be ſuppoſed to be but juſt perfectly candid and equitable; and therefore imperfect

perfect virtue is moſt probably too cenſorious, eſpecially ſince men, by blaming others, hope to exculpate or exalt themſelves. And, agreeably to this, common experience ſhews, that bodily infirmities, diſappointments, pride, ſelf-indulgence, and vice of all kinds, diſpoſe men to look upon the dark ſide of every proſpect, and to magnify the evils natural and moral, that are in the world, both in their own thoughts, and in their diſcourſes to others. It is alſo to be added here, that as our opinions are more in favour of virtue than our practice, ſo our rule of judging muſt of conſequence much condemn the general practice. This circumſtance is very neceſſary for the moral improvement of the world; but, if over-looked, it may miſlead in the preſent inquiry.

Thirdly, The greater intenſeneſs of the particular pains above the correſponding pleaſures in general, and of the particular vices above the oppoſite virtues, as juſt now mentioned, tends, for moſt eminent and beneficient final cauſes in both caſes, to affect the imagination and memory with ſtronger and more laſting impreſſions, ſo as to occur more readily to the invention in all inquiries and ſpeculations of this kind.

Fourthly, If we ſuppoſe, that natural good prevails, upon the whole, in the world, analogy ſeems to require, that moral good (which is, in general, its cauſe) ſhould alſo prevail in like manner. Farther, as we judge, that natural good prevails from the general deſire of life, the pleaſure of recollecting perſons and places, and renewing our acquaintance with them, &c. ſo the ſame things ſeem to determine, that mankind is, upon the whole, rather amiable and reſpectable, than hateful and contemptible, *i. e.* rather virtuous than vicious.

Laſtly, It is to be obſerved, that, in an accurate way of ſpeaking, virtue and vice, are mere relative terms,

terms, like great and little. Whence the average of mankind may be conſidered as a middle point between the poſitive and negative quantities of virtue and vice, as a neutral ſituation. And, upon this ſuppoſition, we might firſt ſhew, that it is man's greateſt intereſt, his *ſummum bonum*, at leaſt, to be neutral; and afterwards, that he ought to preſs forward with all poſſible earneſtneſs towards the infinite perfection of God, though ever at an infinite diſtance. For, as every finite length is infinitely nearer to nothing, than to a metaphyſically infinite one (to make this ſuppoſition for argument's ſake); ſo all finite virtue is infinitely more diſtant from the infinite perfection of God, than from nothing. And thus indeed all our righteouſneſs is *filthy rags*, and all our virtue infinite vice. But this method of conſidering the preſent ſubject is far from oppoſing the purport of this ſection.

If we ſhould call all mere ſelf-regards vice, and all regards to God, and our neighbour, virtue; which is a very proper language, and one that would render the terms of this inquiry preciſe; it ſeems probable to me, that virtue abounds more, upon the whole, than vice. A view to the good of others, at leaſt near relations, is a general motive to action; and a deſign to pleaſe God, at leaſt not to offend him, is very common in the bulk of mankind, or even the worſt. The moſt ordinary and trivial actions are performed without any explicit view at all, at leaſt any that we remember a few moments after the action, *i. e.* are automatic ſecondarily; and ſo cannot be conſidered as either virtuous or vicious; or, if they be, we muſt judge of their complexion by that of the more eminent ones.

Secondly, It may be objected, that, according to the ſcriptures, mankind are in a loſt fallen ſtate; *that they are all gone out of the way, and become corrupt and abominable; that there is none that doth good*, &c.

I anſwer,

I anſwer, that theſe and ſuch like expreſſions ſeem to refer to a former ſtate of innocence in paradiſe, to a future kingdom of righteouſneſs, promiſed in both the Old and New Teſtament, and to the rule of life laid down there, with the conditions requiſite to our admittance into this happy ſtate: and that, in this view of things, the virtue of mankind in general is as deficient, as their happineſs falls ſhort of the joys of the bleſſed; agreeably to which, the preſent life is, in the ſcripture, repreſented as a ſcene of vanity, labour, and ſorrow. And it is a moſt important and alarming conſideration, that the common virtue of mankind will not entitle us to a future reward after death; *that few ſhall find the ſtraight gate; and that, unleſs our righteouſneſs exceed that of the Scribes and Phariſees, we can in no wiſe enter into the kingdom of heaven*, here or hereafter. But then, as, notwithſtanding the curſe paſſed upon man, and upon the ground, God is repreſented in ſcripture *as opening his hand, and filling all things living with plenteouſneſs*, as being kind to all, and manifeſting his infinite and inviſible goodneſs by viſible things, *i. e.* as making natural good to prevail upon the whole, that ſo we may, on this account, be thankful to him, and love him with all our hearts, as he commands; ſo the correſponding precept of loving our neighbour as ourſelves, ſeems to infer, that our neighbour is amiable upon the whole. And we may ſuppoſe, that moral good prevails in general, in a degree proportional to the prevalence of natural good: or, however we underſtand the ſcripture language on this head, it cannot be contrary to the foregoing reaſoning. It muſt appear from thence, that we ought to be, at leaſt, as good as mankind at a *medium*, in order to obtain the *medium* of happineſs; and that, if we have higher views, our road lies towards the infinite perfection of virtue, towards ſpirituality, benevolence,

lence, and piety, and not towards ſenſuality, ſelfiſhneſs, or malevolence.

PROP. XLIX.

The Rule of Life drawn from the Practice and Opinions of Mankind, corrects and improves itſelf perpetually, till at laſt it determines entirely for Virtue, and excludes all Kinds and Degrees of Vice.

For, ſince the imperfect rule, drawn in the laſt propoſition, is, at leaſt, ſo favourable to virtue, as to exclude all great vices, we may conclude, that all groſsly vicious perſons ought to be left out in collecting the rule of life from the practice and opinions of mankind; and that our rule will approach nearer to a perfect one thereby. And as this our ſecond rule, taken from the virtuous and ſuperior orders of the vicious, determines more in favour of virtue, than our firſt, taken indifferently from all the orders both of the virtuous and vicious, ſo it will engage us to exclude more of the vicious from our future eſtimate; and ſo on, till at laſt we determine entirely in favour of virtue. At leaſt, this is a preſumption, which riſes up to view, when we conſider the ſubject in the method here propoſed. Since it appears from the firſt general conſideration of the practice and opinions of mankind, that groſsly vicious perſons muſt be unhappy, it is not reaſonable to allow them any weight in determining what is the proper method for attaining the greateſt poſſible happineſs. And as the ſame obſervation recurs perpetually, with reſpect to all the orders of the vicious, we ſhall at laſt be led to take the moſt virtuous only, as the proper guides of life.

Groſsly vicious perſons may alſo be excluded, from the manifeſt blindneſs and infatuation in common affairs,

affairs, which attends them; and as this extends to the vice of ſenſuality in particular, ſo this vice may be farther excluded from that tendency of our natures to ſpirituality, in our progreſs through life, which is allowed by all, and explained in the foregoing part of this work upon the principle of aſſociation. Malevolence is alſo excluded, becauſe it is itſelf miſery, and, by parity of reaſon, benevolence muſt be a proper recommendation for thoſe, whoſe example and judgment we would follow in our endeavours after happineſs. And it does not appear in this way of propoſing theſe matters, that the ultimate ratio of things admits of any limit to our ſpirituality or benevolence, provided we ſuppoſe, that, at the expiration of this life, a progreſſive ſcene of the ſame kind commences.

The method of reaſoning here uſed bears ſome reſemblance to, and is ſomewhat illuſtrated by, the method of approximation practiſed by mathematicians, in order to determine the roots of equations to any propoſed degree of exactneſs. Farther, as it is common in infinite ſerieſes for the three or four firſt terms either to ſhew what the whole ſeries is, or, at leaſt, that it is infinite; ſo here the ever-growing and ſuperior excellence of ſpirituality and benevolence, which the foregoing conſiderations open to view, by recurring perpetually, and correcting the immediately precedent determination in every ſtep, may incline one to think, in correſpondence to that method of reaſoning in ſerieſes, that ſpirituality and benevolence ought to be made infinite in the ultimate ratio which they bear to ſenſuality and ſelfiſhneſs.

But this method of reaſoning may alſo be illuſtrated, in a more popular way, by applying it to more obvious inquiries. I will give two inſtances of this, the firſt in the health of the body natural, the ſecond in the welfare of the body politic.

Suppoſe

Suppoſe then that a perſon entirely ignorant of phyſic, theoretical and practical, and diſpoſed to treat it as mere gueſs-work and uncertainty, ſhould, however, be deſirous to know, ſince he muſt eat, what diet is moſt conducive to health. The firſt and moſt obvious anſwer will be, the general diet of mankind; becauſe this is the reſult of general experience, and of the natural appetites, which are in ſo many other inſtances fitted to the objects themſelves, and to the uſes and pleaſures, public and private, of human life. And thus the inquirer would be reſtrained from all groſs exceſſes in the quantity or qualities of his diet. But if he farther obſerves, that the opinions of mankind tend more to moderation in diet, than their practice: and that both the practice and opinions of thoſe who appear by other criterions to be the beſt judges, tend more to moderation than thoſe of mankind at an average; and, laſtly, that the ſenſual and intemperate ought entirely to be excluded from having any ſhare in determining this inquiry; this will lead him to great moderation in diet, or even to abſtemiouſneſs.

In like manner let it be aſked, what principles of government are moſt conducive to the public welfare? Are private virtues, or private vices, moſt to be encouraged? Here indeed the anſwer drawn from the average of ſtates will not be an exact medium between both, ſo as to diſcourage all the virtues, and all the degrees of them, as much as the vices, and their degrees; and *vice verſa*, to encourage both equally; but will, upon the whole, be greatly favourable to virtue. However, ſince avarice, vainglory, reſentment, luxury, &c. are, in certain reſpects, even promoted, and the greateſt virtues ſometimes perſecuted, the practice of legiſlators and magiſtrates, in enacting and enforcing laws, will not be entirely favourable to virtue. But then, if we take their opinions, eſpecially thoſe of the legiſlators the moſt celebrated for wiſdom, and leave out barbarous

nations, infant ſtates as yet unſettled, and ſuch as approach near to their diſſolution, the average from the remainder will give the advantage to virtue more and more perpetually. And it may be remarked of both theſe inſtances, that they prove in part the thing to be illuſtrated by them, being not mere emblems only, but in part the reality itſelf. For moderation in diet is one principal virtue, and extremely requiſite to preſerve benevolence in perfection; and health a great ingredient towards happineſs. And the public happineſs, which ariſes from the cultivation of private virtues, includes private happineſs within itſelf.

Perhaps it may not diſpleaſe the reader juſt to hint, that the ſame method of reaſoning may be made uſe of in favour of the chriſtian religion.— All ages and nations have in general believed ſome revelation. There muſt therefore be ſome true one. But the chriſtian is plainly the religion of the moſt learned and knowing part of mankind, and is, in general, more earneſtly believed, in proportion as men are wiſer and better. If we except the *Mahometans*, the reſt of the world are mere ſavages. But mahometiſm bears teſtimony to both the Old and New Teſtament. If the unbeliever will not be determined by this himſelf, let him at leaſt allow, that the more ignorant and unlearned may be directed by it to the true religion. But then they are not to be ſuppoſed capable of making objections. Whoever has a capacity for this, has alſo a capacity to receive the proper anſwers.

It is evident, however, that obſervations of this kind, drawn from the common ſenſe and judgment of mankind, cannot carry us to great lengths with preciſion and certainty. They are very convincing and ſtriking, in reſpect of the firſt principles and rudiments; but, if we would deſcend to minute particulars with accuracy, recourſe muſt be had to the ſeveral practical theories of each art.

SECT.

SECT. II.

OF THE REGARD DUE TO THE PLEASURES AND PAINS OF SENSATION IN FORMING THE RULE OF LIFE.

PROP. L.

The Pleaſures of Senſation ought not to be made a primary Purſuit.

In order to ſhew this, let us put the extreme caſe of the primary purſuit of ſenſible pleaſure; and ſuppoſe, that a perſon endeavours to gratify every impulſe of his bodily appetites, however contrary ſuch gratification may be to the virtues of temperance and chaſtity. Now it is evident that ſuch a one would ſoon deſtroy the bodily faculties themſelves, thereby rendering the objects of ſenſible pleaſure uſeleſs, and alſo precipitate himſelf into pain, diſeaſes, and death, thoſe greateſt of evils in the opinion of the voluptuous. This is a plain matter of obſervation verified every day by the ſad examples of loathſome, tortured wretches, that occur which way ſoever we turn our eyes, in the ſtreets, in private families, in hoſpitals, in palaces. Whether the ſcriptures give a true account how all this ſin and miſery were firſt introduced into the world; alſo whether our reaſon be able to reconcile it with the moral attributes of God, or no; ſtill, that poſitive miſery, and the loſs even of ſenſual happineſs, are thus inſeparably connected with intemperance and lewdneſs, is an evident fact, that no unbeliever, no atheiſt, no ſceptic, that will open his eyes, can diſpute. And it is to be obſerved, that the real in-

ſtances do not, cannot, come up to the caſe here put of a man's yielding to every ſenſual inclination. The moſt groſs and debauched have had ſome reſtraints from ſome other deſires or fears, from the quarters of imagination, ambition, &c. It is evident therefore, *a fortiori*, that the mere gratification of our ſenſual appetites cannot be our primary purſuit, our *ſummum bonum*, or the rule and end of life. They muſt be regulated by, and made ſubſervient to, ſome other part of our natures; elſe we ſhall miſs even the ſenſible pleaſure, that we might have enjoyed, and ſhall fall into the oppoſite pains; which, as has been obſerved before, are, in general far greater, and more exquiſite, than the ſenſible pleaſures.

That indulgence in ſenſual gratifications will not afford us our *ſummum bonum*, may alſo be inferred from the following arguments, viz. that it deſtroys the mental faculties, the apprehenſion, memory, imagination, invention; that it expoſes men to cenſure and contempt; that it brings them to penury; that it is abſolutely inconſiſtent with the duties and pleaſures of benevolence and piety; and that it is all along attended with the ſecret reproaches of the moral ſenſe, and the horrors of a guilty mind. Now it is impoſſible, as will appear from the foregoing hiſtory of aſſociation, how much ſoever a man may be devoted to ſenſual indulgences, entirely to prevent the generation of the ſeveral mental affections; but it is in our power, by an inordinate purſuit of the ſenſible pleaſures, to convert the mental affections into ſources of pain, and to impair and cut off many of the intellectual pleaſures, ſo as that the balance ſhall be againſt us upon the whole. It follows therefore from this utter inconſiſtency of the ſenſible pleaſures, when made a primary purſuit, with the intellectual ones, that they ought not to be ſo; but muſt be ſubjected to, and regulated by, ſome more impartial law, than that of mere ſenſual deſire.

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The ſame thing may be concluded, in a more direct way, from the hiſtory of aſſociation. For the ſenſible pleaſures are the firſt pleaſures of which we are capable, and are the foundation of the intellectual ones, which are formed from them in ſucceſſion, according to the law of aſſociation, as before explained. Now which way ſoever we turn our view, that which is prior in the order of nature is always leſs perfect and principal, than that which is poſterior, the laſt of two contiguous ſtates being the end, the firſt the means ſubſervient to that end, though itſelf be an end in reſpect of ſome foregoing ſtate. The ſenſible pleaſures therefore cannot be ſuppoſed of equal value and dignity with the intellectual, to the generation of which they are made ſubſervient. And we might be led to infer this from the mere analogy of nature, from the numberleſs parallel inſtances which daily obſervation ſuggeſts, and without taking into conſideration the infinite beneficence of the ſupreme cauſe, which yet makes this argument much more ſatisfactory and convincing.

Nay, one may go farther, and obſerve, that as many perſons are evidently forced from the inordinate purſuit of ſenſible pleaſure by its inconſiſtency with itſelf, and with the other parts of our frame, ſo it ſeems, that, if human life was continued to an indefinite length, and yet nothing abated from the rigour of thoſe wholeſome ſeverities, and penal ſufferings, which ſenſuality brings upon us, more and more individuals would perpetually be advanced thereby to a ſtate of ſpirituality; and that it would be impoſſible for any man to perſiſt for ever in ſacrificing all to his ſenſual appetites, in *making his belly his god*, upon ſuch diſadvantageous and painful terms. Intellectual deſires, (*i. e.* deſires in which no particular ſenſible pleaſure is conſpicuous, though they ariſe from a multiform aggregate of the traces of ſuch) muſt be formed, as we ſee they are in fact, in the moſt

luxurious and debauched; and theſe would at laſt become ſufficient to ſtruggle with and overpower the ſenſual deſires, which would at the ſame time be weakened by aſſociations with intenſe pains and ſufferings. And this affords us a pleaſing glimpſe not only of a future ſtate, but alſo of what may be done there by ſtill greater ſeverities, for thoſe whom the miſeries of this life could not free from the ſlavery to their bodily appetites; at the ſame time that it is the ſtrongeſt incentive to us all, to apply ourſelves with earneſtneſs and aſſiduity to the great buſineſs and purport of the preſent life, the transformation of ſenſuality into ſpirituality, by aſſociating the ſenſible pleaſures, and their traces, with proper foreign objects, and ſo forming motives to beneficent actions, and diffuſing them over the whole general courſe of our exiſtence.

Laſtly, The inferior value of the ſenſible pleaſures may be deduced from their being of a confined local nature, and injuring or deſtroying prematurely, *i. e.* before the body in general comes to its period, the particular organs of each, when indulged to exceſs; whereas the intellectual pleaſures affect the whole nervous ſyſtem, *i. e.* all the ſenſible parts, and that nearly in an equal manner, on account of the varieties and combinations of ſenſible local, and of naſcent intellectual pleaſures, which concur in the formation of the mature intellectual ones; ſo that though ſome of them ſhould be indulged to exceſs, and out of due proportion to the reſt, this will be more conſiſtent with the gentle, gradual decay of the mortal body.

We may add, that the duration of mere ſenſual pleaſure is neceſſarily ſhort; and that, even when free from guilt, it cannot, however, afford any pleaſing reflections; whereas one of the principal tendencies of our natures is, and muſt be, from the power of aſſociation in forming them, to the pleaſures

ſures of reflection and conſciouſneſs. In like manner, the evident uſe and reſtriction thereto of one of the principal ſenſible pleaſures to preſerve life and health, with all the conſequent mental faculties, and executive bodily powers; of the other to continue the ſpecies, and to generate and enlarge benevolence; make the ſubordinate nature of both manifeſt in an obvious way, and without entering minutely into the hiſtory of aſſociation: at the ſame time that theſe remarks, when further purſued, unite with that hiſtory, and are eminent parts of the foregoing argument, taken directly from thence.

Thus it appears, that the pleaſures of ſenſation ought not to be made the primary purſuit of life; but require to be reſtrained and directed by ſome foreign regulating power. What that power is, I now come to ſhew in the next propoſition.

PROP. LI.

The Purſuit of ſenſible Pleaſure ought to be regulated by the Precepts of Benevolence, Piety, and the moral Senſe.

THIS may be proved by ſhewing, that the regulation of our ſenſible pleaſures, here propoſed, will contribute both to their own improvement, and to that of the other parts of our natures.

Now benevolence requires, that the pleaſures of ſenſe ſhould be made entirely ſubſervient to the health of the body and mind, that ſo each perſon may beſt fill his place in life, beſt perform the ſeveral relative duties of it, and prolong his days to their utmoſt period, free from great diſeaſes and infirmities; inſtances of which have much authority, and a very beneficial influence, in the world. All gratifications therefore, which tend to produce diſeaſes in the body, and diſturbances in the mind, are for-

bidden by benevolence, and the moſt wholeſome diet as to quantity and quality enjoined by it. The rules of piety are to the ſame purpoſe, whether they be deduced from our relation to God, as our common father and benefactor, who wills that all his children ſhould uſe his bleſſings ſo as to promote the common good thereby; or from the natural ſignatures of his will in the immediate pleaſures and advantages ariſing from moderate refreſhment, and the manifeſt inconveniences and injuries cauſed by exceſs in quantity or quality; or from his revealed will, by which temperance is commanded, and all intemperance ſeverely threatened. In like manner, the moral ſenſe directs us implicitly to the ſame moderation, and government of our appetites, whether it be derived explicitly from the foregoing rules of piety and benevolence, or from ideas of decency, rational ſelf-intereſt, the practice of wiſe and good men, the loathſomeneſs of diſeaſes, the odiouſneſs and miſchiefs of violent paſſions, &c. It is evident therefore, that all theſe three guides of life lead to the ſame end, viz. great moderation in ſenſual enjoyments, though they differ ſomewhat in their motives, and the commodiouſneſs of their application as a rule in the particular occurrences of life.

It is evident at the ſame time, that we are no loſers, in reſpect of the ſenſible pleaſures, by this ſteady adherence to moderation. Our ſenſes, and bodily faculties, are by this means preſerved in their perfection; ſo as to afford the natural exquiſite gratification, and to enable us to perform the ſeveral animal functions with eaſe and pleaſure, and to carry us on to old age with all the integrity of theſe ſenſes and faculties, that is conſiſtent with the neceſſary decay and diſſolution of our earthly body. The ſame moderation and health ariſing from it, inſpire men with perpetual ſerenity, cheerfulneſs, and good-will, and with gratitude towards God, who

gives

gives us all things richly to enjoy, and the ſenſible pleaſures in particular, as the means and earneſt of far greater, both here and hereafter. Now it is obſervable in the common intercourſes of life, that aſſociated circumſtances add greatly to our pleaſures. Thus the pleaſure of receiving a thing from a friend, of making a friend partaker of it, of ſociality and mirth at the time of enjoyment, &c. greatly enhance the gratifications of taſte, as in feaſts, and public entertainments. Much more then may the pure and exalted pleaſures of benevolence and piety, *the eating and drinking to the glory of God* improve theſe pleaſures.

And as we are no loſers, but great gainers, upon the whole, by religious abſtemiouſneſs, in reſpect of the ſenſible pleaſure; ſo are we much more obviouſly ſo, in reſpect of the ſenſible pains and ſufferings, which the intemperate bring upon themſelves. Theſe are of the moſt exquiſite kind, and often of long duration, eſpecially when they give intervals of reſpite, thus exceeding the inventions of the moſt cruel tyrants. They impair the bodily and mental faculties, ſo as to render moſt other enjoyments imperfect and inſipid, diſpoſe to peeviſhneſs, paſſion, and murmuring againſt Providence, and are attended with the horrors of a guilty mind. It follows therefore, that he who would obtain the *maximum* of the ſenſible pleaſures, even thoſe of taſte, muſt not give himſelf up to them; but reſtrain them, and make them ſubject to benevolence, piety, and the moral ſenſe.

Cor. Beſides the ſenſible pains, which exceſſes bring upon men, there are ſome which occur in the daily diſcharge of the functions of life, from fatigue, labour, hardſhips, &c. Now it follows from the ſame method of reaſoning, as that uſed in the two foregoing propoſitions, that the proper method of avoiding theſe pains is not to aim at it directly,

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but in every thing to be guided by the precepts of benevolence, piety, and the moral ſenſe; and that delicate and effeminate perſons endure more from this head of ſufferings, than the charitable and devout, who *go about doing good*, at the apparent expence of their eaſe and quiet.

PROP. LII.

To deduce practical Rules concerning Diet.

WHAT that moderation in diet is, which would moſt contribute to the health of the body and mind, and conſequently which duty requires, is difficult to determine in particular caſes. The following ſubordinate rules may, however, afford ſome aſſiſtance in this matter.

Firſt, then, It is neceſſary to abſtain from all ſuch things as the common experience of mankind determines to be unwholeſome, either in general, or to the particular perſons who make the inquiry. There are indeed ſome vulgar errors of this kind, that are generally received, and which, by being obſerved, may a little abridge one's liberty, without uſe or neceſſity. However, this is of ſmall moment, in compariſon of the dangers ariſing from the free uſe of meats and drinks found by the repeated obſervation of thoſe who have made the trial, to be hurtful, generally or particularly. There ſtill remains, after all theſe are ſet aſide, a ſufficient variety of things approved as wholeſome by the ſame common experience, to anſwer all the purpoſes of life, health, and even ſenſible pleaſure. This rule will be farther explained by thoſe that follow.

Secondly, We ought either totally to abſtain from, or, however, to uſe with great caution and moderation, all foods of high reliſh, whoſe taſtes and ſmells are pungent and acred; all which, though made

made grateful by cuſtom, are at firſt diſagreeable; all which bear a great affinity in taſte, ſmell, and generical or ſpecific characteriſtics, to ſuch as are known to be hurtful; which are poiſonous during a particular ſtate, previous to coction, or other preparation; which are uncommon, or which have very particular effects upon the functions and ſecretions. For all theſe things are ſigns of active properties in the foods to which they belong, and ſhew them to be rather proper for medicines, than for common diet; to be bodies which by an extraordinary efficacy may reduce the ſolids and fluids back to their natural ſtate, when they have deviated from it; and therefore which are very unſuitable to the natural ſtate.

We may conſider farther, that ſtrong taſtes, ſmells, &c. are, according to the modern philoſophy, marks of great powers of attraction and coheſion in the ſmall component particles of natural bodies. Since therefore it is the manifeſt deſign of the deſcending ſerieſes of arteries in animals to ſeparate the particles of their aliment from each other, alſo the particles of theſe particles, &c. that ſo the ſmalleſt particles, or the *minima diviſibilia*, meeting in the veins, may unite according to their reſpective ſizes, and mutual actions, *i. e.* to ſeparate what is heterogeneous, and congregate what is homogeneous, a great difficulty and burden muſt be laid upon the circulation, and upon what is called nature in the body, by all highly agreeable flavours; and, unleſs a proportional degree of muſcular action impels the blood forward, particles of an undue ſize muſt remain undivided, and form obſtructions, which may either never be removed, or not till the obſtructing particles become putrid; and thus, being diſſolved, and mixed with the animal juices, infect them with putreſcence.

Still farther, it may be remarked, that the ſame active particles in foods are probably the ſources and recruits of that nervous power, or of ſome requiſite

to it, by which animal ſenſation and motion, and, by conſequence, intellectual apprehenſion and affection, and their effects upon the body, are carried on. Now it is evident, that affection raiſed to a certain height, and executive powers ready to anſwer the firſt call, are a mental diſeaſe of the moſt pernicious tendency. High-reliſhed aliments, which generate it, are therefore carefully to be avoided, on one hand; as a very inſipid diet, on the other, ſeems inſufficient to qualify us for performing the requiſite functions of life. But there is little danger of erring on this hand, our appetites being but too ſenſibly gratified with the high reliſhes. We may add, as nearly allied to theſe conſiderations, that by ſloring our blood, and the ſolids thence formed with active properties, we lay up matter for future pains, both bodily and mental, whenever either body or mind become diſordered, at the ſame time that a high diet has, as we ſee, an evident tendency to diſorder both.

This ſecond rule coincides, for the moſt part, with the firſt; and may be made uſe of to extend and confirm it. Thoſe meats and drinks, which are found by experience to be hurtful, have, for the moſt part, high reliſhes. We may therefore determine againſt an aliment of a high flavour from a narrower experience, than againſt one of a common moderate flavour. And it is very neceſſary to attend to this criterion, ſince the beſt obſervations upon diet are much perplexed by foreign circumſtances.

Thirdly, All liquors, which have undergone vinous fermentation, ſince they obtain thereby an inflammable, inebriating ſpirit, have from this inebriating quality, which impairs reaſon, and adds force to the paſſions, a mark ſet upon them, as dangerous not only on this account, but on others, to bodily health, &c. and as either totally to be avoided, or not to be uſed, except in ſmall quantities, and rarely.

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The general agreeableneſs of wines and fermented liquors to the taſte, their immediate good effects in languors, dejections, and indigeſtion, and their exhilarating quality, when taken ſparingly, are indeed arguments to ſhew, that there may be a proper uſe of them. But this ſeems rather to be that of medicines, or refreſhments upon ſingular occaſions than of daily food.

It may perhaps be, that the changes produced in the earth at the deluge did ſo alter the nature of vegetable juices, as to render them then firſt capable of producing an inflammable inebriating ſpirit by fermentation; and that this alteration in the juices of vegetables had a principal ſhare in ſhortening the life of man; perhaps of other animals, which laſt might farther contribute to the firſt. So great an event as the deluge may well be ſuppoſed to make a great alteration in all the three kingdoms, mineral, vegetable, and animal. We are ſure of the firſt from natural hiſtory, and of the laſt from the ſcriptures, which relate the gradual ſhortening of man's life after the flood. And the account of *Noah*'s drunkenneſs ſeems to intimate, that it was ſomething new and unexpected. The connection of the three kingdoms with each other is alſo ſo great, that we may reaſonably infer a change in any one, either as a cauſe, or as an effect, from finding it in the other two. However, the ſin of our common parent *Noah*, and his expoſing his nakedneſs, which alſo bears ſome reſemblance to the immediate conſequence of *Adam*'s tranſgreſſion, ought to make us particularly upon our guard. At the ſame time ſeveral other paſſages of ſcripture ſeem fairly to intimate, that there is an allowable uſe of wine in the intercourſes of human life, as where *wine* is ſaid *to make glad the heart of man*, and therefore to be matter of praiſe; our Saviour's turning water into wine; his bleſſing it at his laſt ſupper, and making it the repreſentative of his

blood; and St. *Paul*'s advice to *Timothy*. But very great caution ought to be uſed in this point. The inebriating quality of fermented liquors, by diſordering the mind, is a ſtrong evidence, that they are alſo hurtful to the body, both becauſe of the intimate connection between body and mind, and becauſe all the beneficent ends of Providence are anſwered always by one and the ſame means, and centre in one and the ſame point. Whenever therefore we deviate in one reſpect, we muſt deviate in all. The abſtinence from wine enjoined upon the *Nazarites* at all times, and upon the prieſts during their miniſtration, appears to be a ſtrong intimation of the unſuitableneſs of wine to thoſe who aim at perfection; who would deviate as little as poſſible from the divine life.

This third rule coincides remarkably with both the firſt and ſecond. The ill effects of fermented liquors, when indulged in, are evident from experience; and their high flavours are a principal temptation to an immoderate uſe of them.

Fourthly, With reſpect to animal diet, let it be conſidered, that taking away the lives of animals, in order to convert them into food, does great violence to the principles of benevolence and compaſſion. This appears from the frequent hard-heartedneſs and cruelty found amongſt thoſe perſons, whoſe occupations engage them in deſtroying animal life, as well as from the uneaſineſs which others feel in beholding the butchery of animals. It is moſt evident, in reſpect of the larger animals, and thoſe with whom mankind have a familiar intercourſe, ſuch as oxen, ſheep, domeſtic fowls, &c. ſo as to diſtinguiſh, love, and compaſſionate individuals. Theſe creatures reſemble us greatly in the make of the body in general, and in that of the particular organs of circulation, reſpiration, digeſtion, &c. alſo in the formation of their intellects, memories, and paſſions, and in the ſigns

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of diſtreſs, fear, pain, and death. They often likewiſe win our affections by the marks of peculiar ſagacity, by their inſtincts, helpleſſneſs, innocence, naſcent benevolence, &c. And if there be any glimmering of the hope of an hereafter for them, if they ſhould prove to be our brethren and ſiſters in this higher ſenſe, in immortality as well as mortality, in the permanent principle of our minds, as well as the frail duſt of our bodies, if they ſhould be partakers of the ſame redemption as well as of our fall, and be members of the ſame myſtical body, this would have a particular tendency to increaſe our tenderneſs for them. At the ſame time the preſent circumſtances of things ſeem to require, that no very great alteration ſhould be made in this matter: we ourſelves are under the ſame law of death, and of becoming food to our fellow-animals; and philoſophy has of late diſcovered ſuch numberleſs orders of ſmall animals in parts of diet formerly eſteemed to be void of life, and ſuch an extenſion of life into the vegetable kingdom, that we ſeem under the perpetual neceſſity, either of deſtroying the lives of ſome of the creatures, or of periſhing ourſelves, and ſuffering many others to periſh. This therefore ſeems to be no more than an argument to ſtop us in our career, to make us ſparing and tender in this article, and put us upon conſulting experience more faithfully and impartially, in order to determine what is moſt ſuitable to the purpoſes of life and health, our compaſſion being made by the foregoing conſiderations, in ſome meaſure, a balance to our impetuous bodily appetites. At leaſt, abſtinence from fleſh-meats ſeems left to each perſon's choice, and not neceſſary, unleſs in peculiar circumſtances.

The doctrine of the ſcriptures on this head appears very agreeable to theſe dictates of ſympathy. For *Noah*, and we in him, received a permiſſion from God to eat fleſh; and that this was no more

than a permiſſion, may be concluded from its not being given to *Adam*, from the ſhortening of human life after the flood, from the ſtrict command concerning blood, from the *Iſraelites* being reſtrained from animal food for forty years during their purification and inſtitution in religion in the wilderneſs, from the diſtinction of animals into clean and unclean, from the burning of part in ſacrifice, and ſometimes the whole, from the practice of many *Jews* and *Chriſtians* particularly eminent for piety, &c. All theſe may be conſidered as hints and admonitions to us, as checks and reſtraints upon unbridled carnal appetites and luſts: at the ſame time that our Saviour's partaking in meats with all kinds of men, and many expreſs inſtances and teſtimonies both in the Old and New Teſtament, as particularly the command to eat the paſchal lamb, and other ſacrifices, remove all ſcruple from thoſe perſons who eat with moderation, and in conformity to the rules of piety, benevolence, and the moral ſenſe.

The coincidence of this fourth rule with the firſt and ſecond appears in the ſame manner as that of the third with them.

Fifthly, Having laid down theſe four rules concerning the quality of our aliments, I come next to obſerve, that the quantity ought ſcarce ever to be ſo much as our appetites prompt us to, but, in general, to fall a little ſhort of this. The goodneſs of this rule is verified by common obſervation; nay, one may affirm, that ſmall errors in the quality of our diet may be quite rectified by a proper moderation in reſpect of quantity; whereas a tranſgreſſion in regard to quantity cannot be compenſated by the innocence of the aliment. Such a tranſgreſſion is, however, more rare, where the quality of the aliment is not improper.

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Here it may be aſked how it comes to paſs, that the appetites ſhould, in ſome inſtances, be the beſt guides to us both in reſpect of quality and quantity, and in moſt ſo to the brute creation; and yet, in other inſtances, be ſo greatly apt to miſlead us, to hurry us on to pain, diſeaſes, and death, and theſe not rare and ſingular ones, but the moſt frequent and ordinary that occur. Almoſt every man is tempted by fruits, by wines, natural and artificial ſavours, and high reliſhes, &c. to tranſgreſs either in quantity or quality. Now to this we may anſwer, that in young children the appetites deviate very ſeldom, and very little, from what is moſt conducive to the body; and that they would probably deviate leſs, were children conducted better, were not their taſtes and appetites perverted and corrupted by cuſtoms and practices derived from our corruptions, or our ignorance. This may, at firſt ſight, ſeem harſh, in reſpect of them: but it is at the ſame time a ſtrong inſtance and argument, amongſt many others, of the intimate connection and ſympathy, that unite us all to each other, of our being members of the ſame myſtical body, and of the great ſyſtem of the world's being a ſyſtem of benevolence; and thus it concurs to eſtabliſh the fundamental poſition of theſe papers. However, theſe perverſions and corruptions, from whatever cauſe they ariſe, ſeldom grow to a great height, till ſuch time as children arrive at years of diſcretion in a certain degree, till they get ſome ideas of fitneſs, decency, obedience to ſuperiors, and to God, conſcience, &c. Now, at firſt indeed, the child is mere body, as it were; and therefore it is not at all incongruous to ſuppoſe, that he may be directed by mere bodily appetites and inſtincts. But, when the mental faculties are generated, he then becomes a compound of body and mind; and conſequently it would be incongruous to ſuppoſe him directed in any thing that affects both

body and mind, as diet plainly does, by mere bodily appetites. On the contrary, his rule ought now to be a compound of bodily and mental inſtincts, inclinations, admonitions, &c. directing, influencing and aſſiſting one another. Let this be ſo, and the child or man will very ſeldom deviate from what is moſt conducive to health and happineſs of all kinds. And it is to be obſerved, that the bodily pains and ſufferings, which follow from yielding to mere bodily appetites, in oppoſition to mental conviction, are one principal means, by which the authority and influence of conſcience are eſtabliſhed with reſpect to other branches of deſire. And when a perſon, from theſe or other motives, reverſes his own ſteps in reſpect of the pleaſures of taſte, the irregularity and inordinateneſs of the bodily appetites decline by the ſame degrees, as they grew exceſſive through unlawful gratification. So that, after a perſon has governed himſelf, for a conſiderable time, with ſtrictneſs, from a ſenſe of duty, he will find little difficulty afterwards. The natural appetites will themſelves become the proper ſubſtitutes of benevolence, piety, and the moral ſenſe, and direct a man what and how much is requiſite.

All this reaſoning is confirmed by the obſervation before made on brutes. They continue mere body, as it were, to the laſt; and therefore their bodily appetites ſcarce ever miſlead them. And the evil influences which our corrupt practices and cuſtoms have upon them, is a farther argument for the relation we all bear to each other. In like manner, all the evil mutual influences in animals, with all their original deviations, are marks and evidences of a fallen and degenerate ſtate, however difficult this may be to be accounted for. They are therefore evidences alſo of the truth of the ſcriptures, which not only declare this our degeneracy, and give a general idea of the means by which it

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was introduced, but alſo publiſh the glorious tidings of our redemption from it.

Sixthly, Since the circumſtances of the world are ſuch, as that it is almoſt impoſſible for thoſe who do not retire from it, to avoid errors both in the quantity and quality of their diet, there ſeems a neceſſity for faſting upon certain occaſions. This is a compendious method of reverſing our own wrong ſteps, of preventing the ill effects of exceſs upon the body and mind, breaking ill habits of this ſort at once, and bringing us back, by haſty motions, to the higheſt degrees of ſelf-government, to which imperfect creatures in this world of temptations can attain. It is therefore a duty, which implies and preſuppoſes the preſent imperfection and degeneracy of our natures. And yet this duty, harſh as it ſeems, is probably productive even of ſenſible pleaſure in moſt inſtances; ſince, under due reſtrictions, it appears to be extremely conducive to health and long life, as well as to the regulation of our paſſions. It may be true indeed, that conſtant abſtemiouſneſs would be preferable, in theſe reſpects, to what is called common moderation, practiſed upon ordinary occaſions, and rectified by faſting upon particular ones. But the due degree of abſtemiouſneſs is ſcarce practicable for a conſtancy, as I obſerved juſt now, to thoſe whoſe duty engages them to converſe freely with the world. Let me add here, that faſting will have much more efficacy towards reducing us to a right courſe of action, when it is accompanied with ſuch religious exerciſes, as the practice of good men has joined with it, prayer, ſelf-examination, and works of charity.

Seventhly, Where a perſon has been ſo happily educated, as ſcarce to have tranſgreſſed the bounds of ſtrict moderation, either in eating or drinking, and with reſpect both to quantity and quality, or where he has corrected and brought back himſelf by due

ſeverity, ſufficiently continued, it is better to pay a regard to the foregoing and ſuch like precepts, only to a certain degree, upon occaſions of importance, and without ſcrupuloſity and rigour; and, in the ſmall inſtantaneous occurrences of life, to be directed by the natural appetites, agreeably to the original intention of the author of nature. For anxiety, ſolicitude, and ſcrupuloſity, are greatly prejudicial to the health both of the body and mind, turn us from our natural and equitable judgment of things, augment ſelfiſhneſs, and diſqualify for the practice of the higheſt duties, good-will to men, and complacence and delight in God. The ſcripture precept is *to eat and drink to the glory of God*, not with a ſolicitude about ourſelves.

PROP. LIII.

To deduce practical Rules concerning the Commerce between the Sexes.

THAT benevolence, love, eſteem, and the other ſympathetic affections, give the chief value, and higheſt perfection, to the ſenſible pleaſures between the ſexes, is ſufficiently evident to ſerious and conſiderate perſons. It appears alſo, that theſe pleaſures were intended by Providence, as a principal means, whereby we might be enabled to transfer our affection and concern from ourſelves to others, and learn firſt in the ſingle inſtance of the beloved perſon, afterwards in thoſe of the common offspring, to ſympathize in the pleaſures and pains of our neighbours, and to love them as ourſelves. It follows therefore, that if this great ſource of benevolence be corrupted, or perverted to other purpoſes, the ſocial affections thereon depending will be perverted likewiſe, and degenerate into ſelfiſhneſs or malevolence. Let us inquire in what manner the ſtrong inclinations of the ſexes

ſexes to each other may be beſt conducted, ſo as moſt to contribute to public and private happineſs, ſo as to obtain the *maximum* of it, both from this quarter, and from the other parts of our nature, which are neceſſarily connected with it.

Firſt, then, It is evident, that unreſtrained promiſcuous concubinage would produce the greateſt evils, public and private. By being unreſtrained, it would deſtroy the health and the propagation of mankind; by being promiſcuous, become ineffectual to promote love, and the tender affections, either between the perſons themſelves, or towards their offſpring, and alſo raiſe endleſs jealouſies and quarrels amongſt mankind. There has never perhaps been any nation in the world, where this entire licentiouſneſs has been allowed; the miſchiefs which evidently follow from all great degrees of it, having always laid mankind under ſome reſtraints, and produced ſome imperfect regulations at leaſt, and ſome approaches towards marriage. However, the miſery and deſolation of the barbarous nations of *Africa* and *America*, in whom the violence of paſſion, and the degeneracy of nature, have almoſt obliterated the faint traces of the patriarchal religion; and the many evils, public and private, which attend all unlawful commerce between the ſexes in the more civilized countries; are abundantly ſufficient to evince what is affirmed. The ſhameful, loathſome, and often fatal diſeaſe, which peculiarly attends the vice of lewdneſs, may be conſidered as a moſt unqueſtionable evidence of the divine will. This diſeaſe, with all its conſequences, would ſoon ceaſe amongſt mankind, could they be brought under the reſtraints of lawful marriage; but muſt ever continue, whilſt licentiouſneſs continues. And it is perhaps to this diſeaſe that we owe the preſent tolerable ſtate of things. It may be, that, without this check, the licentiouſneſs, which has always been obſerved to follow improvements in arts

and politeneſs, and to attend upon bodies politic in their declenſion, and which the corruption of the chriſtian religion in ſome, and the diſbelief of it in others, have, in a manner, authorized, would have brought on utter diſſoluteneſs in this weſtern part of the world, ſuch as would have been inconſiſtent with the very exiſtence of regular government. Nay, it may be, that this will ſtill be the caſe, and that we are haſtening to our period, through the great wickedneſs of the world in this reſpect particularly, though our lives, as a body politic, be ſomewhat prolonged, by this correction.

Secondly, Promiſcuous concubinage being thus evidently excluded, it comes next to be inquired, whether the goſpel rule of confining one man to one woman during life, except in the caſe of the woman's adultery, be calculated to produce the greateſt poſſible good, public and private. And here we muſt own ourſelves utterly unable to form any exact judgment. It is impoſſible to determine by any computation, which of all the ways, in which marriage has been or may be regulated, is moſt conducive to happineſs upon the whole: this would be too wide a field, and where alſo we could have no fixed points to guide us: juſt as, in the matter of civil government, it is impoſſible for us to determine, what particular form, monarchy, ariſtocracy, &c. or what mixture of theſe, is moſt accommodated to human nature, and the circumſtances of things. Here therefore we ſeem particularly to want a revelation to direct us; and therefore are under a particular obligation to abide by its award. Now revealed religion commands us, in the caſe of government, to obey thoſe powers that are actually eſtabliſhed, of whatever kind they be, leaving that to the children of this world to diſpute; and, in reſpect of marriage, gives a permiſſion to enter into this ſtate to thoſe who find it requiſite, and alſo a farther permiſ-

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ſion to divorce an adultreſs, and marry another woman; but at the ſame time enjoins the ſtricteſt purity in our thoughts, words, and actions; and that not only in all ſuch as reſpect other perſons beſides the huſband and wife, but in every thing that has a tendency to heighten carnal deſire. Now, though it does not appear, that mankind ever did, or ever would, make ſo ſtrict a rule for themſelves; yet this rule, when made, approves itſelf to our judgments. The ſtricteſt purity and watchfulneſs over ourſelves are neceſſary, in order to make marriage of any kind (which we ſee by the laſt article to be itſelf neceſſary) happy, and productive of private pleaſure and comfort, and of public good, by the united labours of the married pair for themſelves, their offspring, and their relatives. In the preſent imperfect ſtate of things, the forbidding to divorce an adultreſs might ſeem a harſh commandment, above the frailty of our natures, as requiring the moſt entire love and affection, where there are returns of the greateſt contempt and averſion, and the greateſt violation of what are called juſt rights and properties. Now, though the goſpel requires perfection of us ultimately, *i. e.* the moſt entire love in return for the moſt bitter hatred, and an abſolute diſregard of all property both for ourſelves, and for thoſe whom we make our ſubſtitutes after death; yet it makes allowance for human frailty in this eminent inſtance; leaving it, however, to every man, who is arrived at a ſufficient degree of perfection, to walk thereby.

That a greater liberty of divorcing would be leſs ſuited to produce good, public and private, upon the whole, appears probable, becauſe no definite rule could be given in reſpect of other offences, they all admitting of various degrees; and becauſe the proſpect of divorcing, or being divorced, would often increaſe breaches, at the ſame time that frequent divorces would have the worſt conſequences in reſpect

of children, and even approach to promiſcuous concubinage; whereas the indiſſolubility of the marriage bond, with the affection to the common offspring, often produce in both parties the chriſtian virtues of forbearance, and forgiveneſs to each other. It is not at all improbable, that wicked caſuiſts, who have explained away ſo many expreſs goſpel precepts, would, by the influence of princes and great men, have rendered marriage almoſt of no effect, by increaſing the liberty of divorcing.

Thirdly, The great ſinfulneſs of adultery, fornication, and impurity of every kind, appears not only from the manifeſt and great evils and miſeries of various ſorts attending them, the ſhame, intemperance, jealouſies, murders, &c. and from the ſtrictneſs of the goſpel precepts, and the practices of the firſt chriſtians in this reſpect; but alſo becauſe the great ſin of idolatry is repreſented by adultery and fornication in the prophetic writings; and becauſe the moſt heavy judgments are denounced againſt theſe laſt ſins in thoſe writings, when underſtood both in figurative and literal ſenſes. And indeed, as the idolatrous rites of the heathens were generally accompanied with abominable lewdneſs, ſo theſe vicious pleaſures may be conſidered as one of the groſſeſt kinds of idolatry, as withdrawing our affections from the true object, and fixing them on a mere animal pleaſure, on one from the firſt and loweſt claſs, and as worſhipping the heathen deities of *Bacchus* and *Venus*. It is true indeed, that the purſuits of this kind are ſeldom from the alone view of bodily pleaſure, the very nature of our bodies not ſuffering this, ſince the law of the body muſt transfer bodily pleaſures upon foreign objects, ſo as to form intellectual pleaſures. But then the intellectual pleaſure accompanying theſe purſuits is always a vicious one, generally that of a vain miſchievous ambition, which occaſions the

the greateſt confuſion, havock, and diſtreſs, in families, and indeed in the whole race of mankind.

Fourthly, It follows from the ſhame attending theſe pleaſures, the organs, their functions, &c. in all ages and nations, the account of the origin of this ſhame in the third chapter of *Geneſis*, the directions concerning the uncleanneſs of men and women given in the *Jewiſh* law, the rite of circumciſion, the pains of child-birth, with the account of their origin in the third chapter of *Geneſis*, the ſtrictneſs required in the *Jewiſh* prieſts, the abſtinence required in others upon ſacred occaſions, the miraculous conception of Chriſt, his expreſſions concerning marrying, and giving in marriage, at the times of the flood, and laſt judgment, his and St. *Paul*'s recommendation of celibacy, the honourable mention of virginity in the *Revelation*, &c. that theſe pleaſures are to be conſidered as one of the marks of our preſent fallen degenerate ſtate. The mortality of the preſent body, introduced by *Adam*'s ſin, would of courſe require ſome ſuch method of propagation as now ſubſiſts, though nothing of this kind had taken place before the fall; and therefore it may be, that nothing did, or ſomething greatly different from the preſent method. And one may deduce from hence, as well as from the parallel obſervations concerning abſtinence in diet, and faſting (for the ſimiliar nature, and reciprocal influence, of the ſenſible pleaſures juſtifies our inferences here, made either way), alſo from the ſickneſſes and infirmities of human life, and particularly from thoſe of women, that great moderation, and frequent abſtinence, are requiſite. Nay, it even appears, that in many circumſtances marriage itſelf is not to be approved; but rather that men and women, who are advanced to or paſt the meridian of life, who have a call to offices of religion, charity, &c. who labour under certain hereditary diſtempers, have relations

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and dependents that are neceſſitous, &c. ſhould endeavour to ſubdue the body by prayer and faſting. However, great care ought here to be taken not to lay a ſnare before any one.

If we admit the doctrine of this laſt paragraph, viz. that theſe pleaſures are only permitted, and that they are marks of our fallen ſtate, we may perhaps be enabled thereby to caſt ſome light upon the ſcripture hiſtory of the *Patriarchs* and *Jews*. We chriſtians who live in the more adult ages of mankind, have ſtricter precepts, and are obliged to higher degrees of ſpirituality, as we approach nearer to the ſpiritual kingdom of Chriſt; and yet ſome permiſſions are ſuitable to our ſtate. No wonder then, that larger permiſſions were requiſite in the groſs, corporeal, infant ſtate of mankind, conſidered as one individual tending ever from carnality to ſpirituality, in a manner analogous to that of each perſon. However, theſe were only permiſſions to the *Jews* and *Patriarchs*, not commands. It may perhaps be, that while polygamy ſubſiſted according to permiſſion, the number of women might be greater than that of men. This is indeed mere hypotheſis; but ſuch things deſerve to be examined, as ſoon as proper principles are diſcovered, upon which to proceed. The proportional number of men deſtroyed by wars in ancient times, appears to be much greater than it is now.

Here it may be aſked, If it be requiſite in certain perſons not to marry at all, and in every one to be abſtinent, how can it be ſaid, that this rule of life gives the *maximum* of thoſe pleaſures? Now, with reſpect to thoſe who never marry, at the ſame time devoting themſelves really and earneſtly to God, to attend upon him without diſtraction, it may be obſerved, that they enjoy the peculiar privilege of being exempted from many of the great cares and ſorrows of this life; and that the prophetical bleſſing of the

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barren's having more children than ſhe which hath an huſband, is eminently applicable to them. They that marry, muſt have ſorrow in the fleſh; and if thoſe who are under the neceſſity of marrying, becauſe they burn, humble themſelves agreeably to this experience of their own weakneſs, they will find marriage to be a proper clue to lead them through the difficulties and miſeries of this life to a better ſtate. But if a perſon, who is likewiſe humble, can humbly hope, upon a fair examination, that he is not under this neceſſity, there is no occaſion, that he ſhould take this burden upon him. The benevolent and devout affections, though wanting one ſource, will, upon the whole, grow faiter from other cauſes; and if he makes all with whom he has any intercourſes, all to whom his deſires, prayers, and endeavours, can extend, his ſpiritual children, ſtill with all humility, and diffidence of himſelf, their ſpiritual ultimate happineſs, through the infinite mercy of God, will be a fund of joy far ſuperior to any that is, and muſt be, tinctured with the defilements of this world, as that of natural parents cannot but be. As to theſe, *i. e.* the perſons that marry, it is probable, that they approach to the *maximum* of the ſenſible pleaſures much more than the diſſolute; and if, in any caſe, they do, for the ſake of religion, forego any part of what is permitted, it cannot be doubted, but this will be repaid with ample intereſt by ſpiritual pleaſures. But this ſubject is of too nice and difficult a nature to be farther purſued. Let thoſe who need particular information apply to God for it; and eſpecially let them pray, that they may join chriſtian prudence with chriſtian purity and holineſs.

It may alſo be aſked here, if marriage be only permitted, and celibacy preferable in the chriſtian ſenſe of things, what becomes of the propagation and increaſe of mankind, which ſeem to have a neceſſary connection with the greateſt public good? I anſwer, that

that this kind of cares is far above us, and therefore foreign to our proper buſineſs; whereas the precept, or admonition rather, to thoſe who can receive it, is plain, and ſtands upon the authority of the chriſtian revelation itſelf, and of the other natural ſignatures of the divine will before-mentioned. I anſwer alſo, that this world is a ruined world; that it muſt be deſtroyed by fire, as *Sodom* was, perhaps on account of our great curruption in this reſpect; ſo that its perfection in this ſtate of things is impoſſible, and therefore no end for us, though its correction and melioration be, as far as we have opportunity; that this admonition cannot be received by all; and therefore that the few, by whom alone it can be received, may contribute more to the increaſe of mankind by their promoting virtue, and reſtraining vice, than any poſterity of theirs could do; and laſtly, that, if it could be obſerved by all, we ſhould all be near to chriſtian perfection, *i. e.* to the glorious kingdom of Chriſt, and the new ſtate of things. Obſervations of the ſame kind may be made upon all the other goſpel precepts. If theſe be kept in their utmoſt purity by a few only, they ſeem to promote even temporal happineſs upon the whole; and this appears to be the truth of the caſe, the real fact, ſince no directions or exhortations can extend to, and prevail with, more than a few, in compariſon of the bulk of mankind, however good and earneſt they may be. If all could be influenced at once, it would be ſtill infinitely preferable, becauſe this would be *life from the dead*, and *the kingdom of righteouſneſs*. But this ſeems impoſſible. We need not therefore fear any intermediate degree. The more chriſtian purity and perfection prevail, the better muſt it be on all real accounts, whatever becomes of trade, arts, grandeur, &c.

Laſtly, I cannot diſmiſs this ſubject without making ſome remarks upon education. The deſires

between

between the ſexes are far more violent than any others; the final cauſe of which is by writers very juſtly ſaid to be, that men and women may be compelled as it were, to undertake the neceſſary cares and labours, that attend the married pair, in providing for themſelves, and their offſpring. But there is reaſon to believe from other parallel caſes, that theſe deſires are not originally much diſproportionate to the end; and that, if due care was taken, they would not ariſe in youth much before the proper time to ſet about this end, before the bodies of the ſexes were mature, able to endure labour and fatigue, and the woman to undergo child-birth, with its conſequences, of nurſing the infant, &c. and their minds ripe for the cares and foreſight required in family affairs. Something of this kind would probably happen, whatever care the parents took of the bodies and minds of their children, on account of our fallen degenerate ſtate, our ſtate of trial, which appears in all our other bodily appetites, and intellectual deſires. But the violence and unſeaſonableneſs of theſe paſſions are ſo manifeſt in the generality of young perſons, that one cannot but conclude the general education of youth to be groſsly erroneous and perverted. And this will appear very evident in fact upon examination. The diet of children, and young perſons, is not ſufficiently plain and ſparing; which would at the ſame time lay a better foundation for health, and freedom from diſeaſes, and put ſome check upon theſe paſſions. They are brought up in effeminacy, and neglect of bodily labour, which would prepare both body and mind for care and ſorrow, and keep down carnal deſire. The due culture of the mind, eſpecially in reſpect of religion, is almoſt univerſally neglected; ſo that they are unfit for buſineſs, left expoſed to temptations through idleneſs, and want of employment, and are deſtitute of the chief armour, that of religious motives, whereby to oppoſe temptation.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, the converſation which they hear, and the books which they read, lewd heathen poets, modern plays, romances, &c. are ſo corrupt in this reſpect, that it is matter of aſtoniſhment, how a parent, who has any degree of ſerioufneſs (I will not ſay religion) himſelf, or concern for his child, can avoid ſeeing the immediate deſtructive conſequences, or think that any conſiderations, relating to this world, can be a balance to theſe.

PROP. LIV.

To deduce practical Rules concerning the Hardſhips, Pains, and Uneaſineſſes, that occur in the daily Intercourſes of Life.

I HAVE already obſerved in general, *Prop.* 51. *Cor.* that a regard to the precepts of benevolence, piety, and the moral ſenſe, affords us the beſt proſpect for avoiding and leſſening theſe. I will now exemplify and apply this doctrine more particularly.

Firſt, then, It is evident, that luxury, ſelf-indulgence, and an indolent averſion to perform the duties of a man's ſtation, do not only bring on groſs bodily diſeaſes; but alſo, previouſly to this, are often apt to lead men into ſuch a degree of ſolicitude, anxiety, and fearfulneſs, in minute affairs, as to make them inflict upon themſelves greater torments, than the moſt cruel tyrant could invent. The complaints, which are uſually ſtyled nervous, are peculiarly apt to infeſt this claſs of perſons; and I need not ſay to thoſe, who either have themſelves experienced them, or attended to them in others, of how grievous a nature they are. Now, though ſomething is to be allowed here to natural conſtitution, and hereditary tendencies, alſo to the great injuries ſometimes done to the nervous ſyſtem by profuſe evacuations, and violent diſtempers, in conſequence where-

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of it may be proper and neceſſary in certain caſes to adminiſter ſuch medicines, as are ſuitable to the particular ſymptoms, and temporary exigencies; yet there ſeems to be no way ſo probable of getting out of this ſelf-tormenting ſtate, this labyrinth of error and anxiety, as by prayer and reſignation to God, by charity, and taking upon one's ſelf the cares and fears of others according to our rank and ſtation in life, eaſing our own burden thereby, and by conſtant, laborious, bodily exerciſe, ſuch particularly as occurs in the faithful diſcharge of duty, with great moderation in the ſenſible pleaſures. Could the unhappy perſons of this ſort be prevailed upon to enter on ſuch a courſe with courage and ſteadineſs, notwithſtanding the pains, difficulties, and uneaſineſſes, which would attend it at firſt, all would generally begin to clear up even in reſpect of this world, ſo as that they would regain ſome tolerable degrees of health, ſerenity, and even cheerfulneſs.

Secondly, Human life is in ſo imperfect and diſorderly a ſtate, on account of the fall, that it is impoſſible to avoid all exceſſes, and hardſhips from heat, cold, hunger, accidents, &c. But then theſe may be rendered harmleſs and eaſy to a great degree, by accuſtoming the body to them; which the conſtant and faithful diſcharge of duty by each perſon, in particular does, in reſpect of thoſe exceſſes and hardſhips, that are moſt likely to befal *him*.

Thirdly, External injuries fall much to the ſhare of the imprudent. Now prudence is a virtue, *i. e.* a dictate of the moral ſenſe, and a command from God; and imprudence, agreeably hereto, the manifeſt offspring of ſome vicious paſſion or other, for the moſt part.

Fourthly, Bodily pains are often inflicted by men, either in the way of public authority, or of private reſentment and malice. But it is very evident, that the

the benevolent muſt fare better in this reſpect, than the malevolent and miſchievous.

Fifthly, Whatever evils befal a man, religion, and the belief of a happy futurity, enable him to ſupport himſelf under them much better than he could otherwiſe do. The true chriſtian not only ought, but is alſo able, for the moſt part, to *rejoice in tribulation.* And this is the genuine, ultimate, and indeed only perfect ſolution of all difficulties relating to the pleaſures and pains, both ſenſible and intellectual. For, though it be certain, that a benevolent and pious man has the faireſt proſpect for obtaining ſenſible pleaſure, and avoiding ſenſible pain, in general, and upon a fair balance; alſo that the more wicked any one is, the leſs pleaſure, and more pain, muſt he expect; yet ſtill it will often happen, that a perſon is obliged from a ſenſe of duty, from benevolence, adherence to true religion, the dictates of conſcience, or a goſpel precept to forego pleaſures, or endure pains, where there is no probability, that a recompence will be made during this life; and ſometimes it is required of a man even to ſeal his teſtimony with his blood. Now, in theſe caſes, rational ſelf-intereſt has nothing left, which can ſatisfy its demands, beſides the hope and expectation of a happy futurity; but the preſent pleaſure, which theſe afford, is ſome earneſt of the thing hoped and expected; it is alſo, in certain caſes, ſo great, as to overpower, and almoſt annihilate, the oppoſite pains.

Here let it be obſerved, that as this frail corruptible body muſt at laſt return to its original duſt, and loſe its power of conveying pleaſure to us, which it does gradually for a long time before death from mere old age; ſo it is natural to expect, that the *maximum* of its pleaſures ſhould not always be attained, even by that which is the genuine rule of life. For death is a mark of our preſent fallen ſtate; and

therefore

therefore we may have this farther mark alſo, that the true rule, which, in a paradiſiacal ſtate, would have carried every thing in its order to perfection, will now do it only in the general; ſhewing us, firſt, by its being very general, that it is the true rule; and ſecondly, by its not being univerſal that we have deviated from our original make.

It may not be amiſs to add a few words here concerning ſleep. The analogy taken from the foregoing rules teaches, that we ought not to indulge in this to the utmoſt, but to break it off a little before the natural inclination thereto totally expires. And this poſition is remarkably confirmed both by the many advantages to body and mind, which reſult from riſing early; and by the ſcripture precepts concerning *watching*; which, as appears to me, ought to be taken as well in their ſtrictly literal ſenſe upon proper occaſions, as in their more diſtant and figurative one.

SECT. III.

OF THE REGARD DUE TO THE PLEASURES AND PAINS OF IMAGINATION IN FORMING THE RULE OF LIFE.

PROP. LV.

The Pleaſures of Imagination ought not to be made a primary Purſuit.

For, Firſt, It does not appear that thoſe who devote themſelves to the ſtudy of the polite arts, or of ſcience, or to any other pleaſure of mere imagination, as their chief end and purſuit, attain to a greater degree of happineſs than the reſt of the world. The frequent repetition of theſe pleaſures cloys, as in other caſes: and though the whole circle of them is ſo extenſive, as that it might, in ſome meaſure, obviate this objection; yet the human fancy is too narrow to take in this whole circle, and the greateſt virtuoſos do, in fact, ſeldom apply themſelves to more than one or two conſiderable branches.—The ways in which the pleaſures of beauty are uſually generated, and transferred upon the ſeveral objects, are often oppoſite to, and inconſiſtent with, one another; ſo as to mix deformity with beauty, and to occaſion an unpleaſing diſcordancy of opinion, not only in different perſons, but even in the ſame. This is evident from the foregoing hiſtory of theſe pleaſures, and of their derivation from arbitrary and accidental aſſociations, as well as from the obſervation of the fact in real life. And it is not uncommon to ſee men, after a long and immoderate purſuit of one claſs of beauty, natural or artificial, deviate into ſuch by-paths

by-paths and ſingularities, as that the objects excite pain rather than pleaſure; their limits, for excellence and perfection being narrow, and their rules abſurd; and all that falls ſhort of theſe, being condemned by them, as deformed and monſtrous.—Eminent votaries of this kind are generally remarkable for ignorance and imprudence in common neceſſary affairs; and thus they are expoſed to much ridicule and contempt, as well as to other great inconveniences.—The ſame perſons are peculiarly liable to vanity, ſelf-conceit, cenſoriouſneſs, moroſeneſs, jealouſy, and envy; which ſurely are very uneaſy companions in a man's own breaſt, as well as the occaſions of many inſults and harms from abroad. And I think I may add, that ſcepticiſm in religious matters is alſo a frequent attendant here; which, if it could be ſuppoſed free from danger as to futurity, is at leaſt very uncomfortable as to the preſent. For as the extravagant encomiums beſtowed upon works of taſte and genius beget a more than ordinary degree of ſelf-conceit in the virtuoſo, ſo this ſelf-conceit, this ſuperiority which he fancies he has over the reſt of the world in one branch of knowledge, is by himſelf often ſuppoſed to extend to the reſt, in which yet it is probable that he is uncommonly ignorant through want of application: and thus he becomes either dogmatical or ſceptical; the firſt of which qualities, though ſeemingly oppoſite to the laſt, is, in reality, nearly related to it. And, as the ſympathetic and theopathetic affections are peculiarly neceſſary for underſtanding matters of a religious nature aright, no kind or degree of learning being ſufficient for this purpoſe without theſe, if the purſuit of literature, or ſcience, be ſo ſtrong, as to ſtifle and ſuppreſs the growth of theſe, or to diſtort them, religion, which cannot be reconciled to ſuch a temper, will probably be treated as incomprehenſible, abſurd, uncertain, or, incredible.—However, it is difficult to repreſent

juſtly, in any of the reſpects here mentioned, what is the genuine conſequence of the mere purſuit of the pleaſures of imagination, their votaries being alſo, for the moſt part, extremely over-run with the groſs vice of ambition, as was juſt now obſerved. But then this does not invalidate any of the foregoing objections, as will be ſeen when we come to conſider that vice in the next ſection.

Secondly, It is evident, that the pleaſures of imagination were not intended for our primary purſuit, becauſe they are, in general, the firſt of our intellectual pleaſures, which are generated from the ſenſible ones by aſſociation, come to their height early in life, and decline in old age. There are indeed ſome few perſons, who continue devoted to them during life; but there are alſo ſome, who remain ſenſualiſts to the laſt; which ſingularities are, however, in neither caſe, arguments of the deſign of Providence, that it ſhould be ſo. And, in general, we may reaſon here, as we did above, in deducing the inferior value of the ſenſible pleaſures from their being the loweſt claſs. The pleaſures of imagination are the next remove above the ſenſible ones, and have, in their proper place and degree, a great efficacy in improving and perfecting our natures. They are to men in the early part of their adult age, what playthings are to children; they teach them a love for regularity, exactneſs, truth, ſimplicity; they lead them to the knowledge of many important truths relating to themſelves, the external world, and its author; they habituate to invent, and reaſon by analogy and induction; and when the ſocial, moral, and religious affections begin to be generated in us, we may make a much quicker progreſs towards the perfection of our natures by having a due ſtock, and no more than a due ſtock, of knowledge, in natural and artificial things, of a reliſh for natural and artificial beauty. It deſerves particular notice here, that

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the language uſed in reſpect of the ideas, pleaſures, and pains of imagination, is applicable to thoſe of the moral ſenſe with a peculiar fitneſs and ſignificancy; as *vice verſa*, the proper language of the moral ſenſe does, in many caſes, add great beauty to poetry, oratory, &c. when uſed catachreſtically. And we may obſerve in general, that as the pleaſures of imagination are manifeſtly intended to generate and augment the higher orders, particularly thoſe of ſympathy, theopathy, and the moral ſenſe; ſo theſe laſt may be made to improve and perfect thoſe, as I ſhall now endeavour to ſhew under the propoſition that follows.

PROP. LVI.

The Purſuit of the Pleaſures of Imagination ought to be regulated by the Precepts of Benevolence, Piety, and the Moral Senſe.

For, Firſt, Thoſe parts of the arts and ſciences which bring glory to God, and advantage to mankind, which inſpire devotion, and inſtruct us how to be uſeful to others, abound with more and greater beauties, than ſuch as are profane, miſchievous, unprofitable, or minute. Thus the ſtudy of the ſcriptures, of natural hiſtory, and natural philoſophy, of the frame of the human mind, &c. when undertaken and purſued with benevolent and pious intentions, leads to more elegant problems, and ſurprizing diſcoveries, than any ſtudy intended for mere private amuſement.

Secondly, It may be conſidered as a reaſon for this, that ſince this world is a ſyſtem of benevolence, and conſequently its author the object of unbounded love and adoration, benevolence and piety are the only true guides in our inquiries into it, the only keys which will unlock the myſteries of nature, and clues which lead through her labyrinths. Of this,

all branches of natural hiſtory, and natural philoſophy, afford abundant inſtances; and the ſame thing may be ſaid of civil hiſtory, when illuſtrated and cleared by the ſcriptures, ſo as to open to view the ſucceſſive diſpenſations of God to mankind; but it has been more particularly taken notice of in the frame of the human body, and in the ſymptoms and tendencies of diſtempers. In all theſe matters let the inquirer take it for granted previouſly, that every thing is right, and the beſt that it can be, *cæteris manentibus*, *i. e.* let him, with a pious confidence, ſeek for benevolent purpoſes; and he will be, always directed to the right road, and, after a due continuance in it, attain to ſome new and valuable truth; whereas every other principle and motive of examination, being foreign to the great plan, upon which the univerſe is conſtructed, muſt lead into endleſs mazes, errors, and perplexities.

Thirdly, It may be conſidered as a farther reaſon of the ſame thing, that benevolence and piety, and, by conſequence, their offſpring, the moral ſenſe, are the only things which can give a genuine and permanent luſtre to the truths that are diſcovered. A man with the moſt perfect comprehenſion, that his faculties will allow, of that infinite profuſion of good which overflows the whole creation, and of all the fountains and conduits of it, and yet having no ſhare of the original ſource from whence all theſe were derived, having no pittance or ray of the inexhauſtible benevolence of the great Creator, no love for that boundleſs ocean of love, or ſenſe of duty to him, would be no more happy, than an accomptant is rich by reckoning up millions, or a miſer by poſſeſſing them.

Fourthly, It may be remarked, that the pleaſures of imagination point to devotion in a particular manner by their unlimited nature. For all beauty, both natural and artificial, begins to fade and languiſh

guiſh after a ſhort acquaintance with it: novelty is a never failing requiſite: we look down, with indifference and contempt, upon what we comprehend eaſily; and are ever aiming at, and purſuing, ſuch objects as are but juſt within the compaſs of our preſent faculties What is it now that we ought to learn from this diſſatisfaction to look behind us, and tendency to preſs forward; from this endleſs graſping after infinity? Is it not, that the infinite Author of all things has ſo formed our faculties, that nothing leſs than himſelf can be an adequate object for them? That it is in vain to hope for full and laſting ſatisfaction from any thing finite, however great and glorious, ſince it will itſelf teach us to conceive and deſire ſomething ſtill more ſo? That, as nothing can give us more than a tranſitory delight, if its relation to God be excluded; ſo every thing, when conſidered as the production of his infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, will gratify our utmoſt expectations, ſince we may, in this view, ſee that every thing has infinite uſes and excellencies? There is not an atom perhaps in the whole univerſe, which does not abound with millions of worlds; and, converſely, this great ſyſtem of the ſun, planets, and fixed ſtars, may be no more than a ſingle conſtituent particle of ſome body of an immenſe relative magnitude, &c. In like manner, there is not a moment of time ſo ſmall, but it may include millions of ages in the eſtimation of ſome beings; and, converſely, the largeſt cycle which human art is able to invent, may be no more than the twinkling of an eye in that of others, &c. The infinite diviſibility and extent of ſpace and time admit of ſuch infinities upon infinities, aſcending and deſcending, as make the imagination giddy, when it attempts to ſurvey them. But, however this be, we may be ſure, that the true ſyſtem of things is infinitely more tranſcendent in greatneſs and goodneſs, than any deſcription or conception of ours can

make it; and that the voice of nature is an univerſal chorus of joy and tranſport, in which the leaſt and vileſt, according to common eſtimation, bear a proper part, as well as thoſe whoſe preſent ſuperiority over them appears indefinitely great, and may bear an equal one in the true and ultimate ratio of things. And thus the conſideration of God gives a reliſh and luſtre to ſpeculations, which are otherwiſe dry and unſatisfactory, or which perhaps would confound and terrify. Thus we may learn to rejoice in every thing we ſee, in the bleſſings paſt, preſent, and future; which we receive either in our own perſons, or in thoſe of others; to become partakers of the divine nature, loving and lovely, holy and happy.

PROP. LVII.

To deduce practical Rules concerning the Elegancies and Amuſements of Life.

By the elegancies of life I mean the artificial beauties of houſes, gardens, furniture, dreſs, &c, which are ſo much ſtudied in high life. There is in theſe, as in all other things, a certain middle point, which coincides with our duty, and our happineſs; whilſt all great deviations from it incur the cenſure of viciouſneſs, or, at leaſt, of unſuitableneſs and abſurdity. But it is not eaſy to determine this point exactly, in the ſeveral circumſtances of each particular perſon. I will here ſet down the principal reaſons againſt an exceſs on each hand, leaving it to every perſon to judge for himſelf how far they hold in his own particular circumſtances.

We may then urge againſt the immoderate purſuit of the elegancies of life;

Firſt, That vanity, oſtentation, and the unlawful pleaſures of property, of calling things our own, are almoſt

almoſt inſeparable from the purſuit of theſe elegancies, and often engroſs all to themſelves.

Secondly, That the profuſion of expence requiſite here is inconſiſtent with the charity due to thoſe, that are afflicted in mind, body, and eſtate.

Thirdly, That the beauties of nature are far ſuperior to all artificial ones, *Solomon in all his glory not being arrayed like a lily of the field*; that they are open to every one, and therefore rather reſtrain than feed the deſire of property; and that they lead to humility, devotion, and the ſtudy of the ways of Providence. We ought therefore much rather to apply ourſelves to the contemplation of natural than of artificial beauty.

Fourthly, Even the beauties of *nature* are much chequered with irregularities and deformities, this world being only the ruins of a paradiſiacal one. We muſt not therefore expect entire order and perfection in it, till we have paſſed through the gate of death, and are arrived at our ſecond paradiſiacal ſtate, till the heavens and earth, and all things in them, be made anew. How much leſs then can we hope for perfection in the works of human art! And yet, if we ſeriouſly apply ourſelves to theſe, we ſhall be very apt to flatter ourſelves with ſuch falſe hopes, and to forget *that* heavenly country, the deſire and expectation of whoſe glories and beauties can alone carry us through the preſent wilderneſs with any degree of comfort and joy.

But then, on the contrary, that ſome attention may lawfully, and even ought to be paid to artificial beauty, will appear from the following reaſons.

Firſt, Convenience and utility are certainly lawful ends; nay, we are even ſent hither to promote theſe publicly and privately. But theſe coincide, for the moſt part, with, and are promoted by, ſimplicity, neatneſs, regularity, and juſtneſs of proportion, *i. e.* with ſome of the ſources of artificial beauty; though

not

not with all; ſuch as grandeur, profuſe variety, accumulation of natural beauties and luſtres, and ſumptuouſneſs.

Secondly, The ſtudy of artificial beauty draws us off from the groſs ſenſual pleaſures; refines and ſpiritualizes our deſires; and, when duly limited, teaches us to transfer and apply our ideas of ſimplicity, uniformity, and juſtneſs of proportion, to the heart and affections.

Thirdly, It is neceſſary for us in this degenerate ſtate, and world of temptations, to be occupied in innocent purſuits, leſt we fall into ſuch as are miſchievous and ſinful. It is therefore, in its proper place and degree, as great charity to mankind to employ the poor in improving and ornamenting external things, rewarding them generouſly and prudently for their labours, as to give alms; and as uſeful to the rich to be employed in contriving and conducting ſuch deſigns at certain times, as to read, meditate, or pray, at others. Our natures are too feeble to be always ſtrained to the pitch of an active devotion or charity, ſo that we muſt be content at ſome intervals to take up with engagements that are merely innocent, ſitting looſe to them, and purſuing them without eagerneſs and intention of mind. However, let it be well obſerved, that there are very few upon whom this third reaſon for the purſuit of artificial beauty need be inculcated; and that I preſume not at all to interfere with thoſe holy perſons, who find themſelves able to devote all their talents, their whole time, fortunes, bodily and mental abilities, &c. to the great Author of all, in a direct and immediate manner.

Now theſe and ſuch like reaſons, for and againſt the purſuit of the elegancies of life, hold in various degrees according to the ſeveral circumſtances of particular perſons; and it will not be difficult for thoſe who ſit looſe to the world, and its vanities,

to

to balance them againſt one another in each caſe, ſo as to approach nearly to that *medium*, wherein our duty and happineſs coincide.

The practice of playing at games of chance and ſkill is one of the principal amuſements of life; and it may be thought hard to condemn it as abſolutely unlawful, ſince there are particular caſes of perſons infirm in body or mind, where it ſeems requiſite to draw them out of themſelves, by a variety of ideas and ends in view, which gently engage the attention. But this reaſon takes place in very few inſtances. The general motives to play are avarice, joined with a fraudulent intention, explicit or implicit, oſtentation of ſkill, and ſpleen through the want of ſome ſerious, uſeful occupation. And as this practice ariſes from ſuch corrupt ſources, ſo it has a tendency to increaſe them; and indeed may be conſidered as an expreſs method of begetting and inculcating ſelf-intereſt, ill-will, envy, &c. For by gaming a man learns to purſue his own intereſt ſolely and explicitly, and to rejoice at the loſs of others, as his own gain; grieve at their gain, as his own loſs; thus entirely reverſing the order eſtabliſhed by Providence for ſocial creatures, in which the advantage of one meets in the ſame point as the advantage of another, and their diſadvantage likewiſe. Let the loſs of time, health, fortune, reputation, ſerenity of temper, &c. be conſidered alſo.

PROP. LVIII.

To deduce practical Rules concerning Mirth, Wit, and Humour.

Here it is neceſſary,

First, To avoid all ſuch mirth, wit, and humour, as has any mixture of profaneneſs in it, *i. e.* all ſuch as leſſens our reverence to God, and religious ſubjects;

ſubjects; aggrieves our neighbour; or excites corrupt and impure inclinations in ourſelves. Since then it appears from the hiſtory of wit and humour, given in the foregoing part of this work, that the greateſt part of what paſſes under theſe names, and that which ſtrikes us moſt, has a ſinful tendency, it is neceſſary to be extremely moderate and cautious in our mirth, and in our attention to, and endeavours after, wit and humour.

Secondly, Let us ſuppoſe the mirth to be innocent, and kept within due bounds; ſtill the frequent returns of it beget a levity and diſſipation of mind, that are by no means conſiſtent with that ſerioufneſs and watchfulneſs which are required in chriſtians, ſurrounded with temptations, and yet aiming at purity and perfection; in ſtrangers and pilgrims, who ought to have the uncertain time of their departure hence always in view. We may add, that wit and humour, by ariſing, for the moſt part, from fictitious contraſts and coincidences, diſqualify the mind for the purſuit after truth, and attending to the uſeful practical relations of things, as has already been obſerved in the hiſtory of them; and that the ſtate of the brain which accompanies mirth cannot ſubſiſt long, or return frequently, without injuring it; but muſt, from the very frame of our natures, end at laſt in the oppoſite ſtate of ſorrow, dejection, and horror.

Thirdly, There is, for the moſt part, great vainglory and oſtentation in all attempts after wit and humour. Men of wit ſeek to be admired and careſſed by others for the poignancy, delicacy, brilliancy, of their ſayings, hints, and repartees; and are perpetually racking their inventions from this deſire of applauſe. Now, as ſo ſinful a motive muſt defile all that proceeds from it, ſo the ſtraining our faculties to an unnatural pitch is inconſiſtent with that eaſe and equality in converſation, which our ſocial nature, and a mutual deſire to pleaſe, and be pleaſed require.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, A due attention being previouſly paid to the foregoing and ſuch like cautions, it ſeems not only allowable, but even requiſite, to endeavour at a ſtate of perpetual cheerfulneſs, and to allow ourſelves to be amuſed and diverted by the modeſt, innocent pleaſantries of our friends and acquaintance, contributing alſo ourſelves thereto, as far as is eaſy and natural to us. This temper of mind flows from benevolence and ſociality, and in its turn begets them; it relieves the mind, and qualifies us for the diſcharge of ſerious and afflicting duties, when the order of Providence lays them upon us; is a mark of uprightneſs and indifference to the world, this infantine gaiety of heart being moſt obſervable in thoſe who look upon all that the world offers as mere toys and amuſements; and it helps to correct, in ourſelves and others, many little follies and abſurdities, which, though they ſcarce deſerve a ſeverer chaſtiſement, yet ought not to be overlooked entirely.

PROP. LIX.

To deduce practical Rules concerning the Purſuit of the polite Arts; and particularly of Muſic, Painting, and Poetry.

I WILL here enumerate the principal ways in which the three ſiſter arts of muſic, painting, and poetry, contribute either to corrupt or improve our minds; as it will thence appear in what manner, and to what degree, they are allowable, or even commendable, and in what caſes to be condemned as the vanities and ſinful pleaſures of the world, abjured by all ſincere chriſtians.

Firſt, then, It is evident, that moſt kinds of muſic, painting, and poetry, have cloſe connections with vice, particularly with the vices of intemperance and lewdneſs; that they repreſent them in gay, pleaſing

pleaſing colours, or, at leaſt, take off from the abhorrence due to them; that they cannot be enjoyed without *evil communications*, and concurrence in the pagan ſhew and pomp of the world; and that they introduce a frame of mind, quite oppoſite to that of devotion, and earneſt concern for our own and other's future welfare. This is evident of public diverſions, collections of pictures, academies for painting, ſtatuary, &c, ancient heathen poetry, modern poetry of moſt kinds, plays, romances, &c. If there be any who doubt of this, it muſt be from the want of a duly ſerious frame of mind.

Secondly, A perſon cannot acquire any great ſkill in theſe arts, either as a critic or a maſter of them, without a great conſumption of time: they are very apt to excite vanity, ſelf-conceit, and mutual flatteries, in their votaries; and, in many caſes, the expence of fortunes is too conſiderable to be reconciled to the charity and beneficence due to the indigent.

Thirdly, All theſe arts are capable of being devoted to the immediate ſervice of God and religion in an eminent manner; and, when ſo devoted, they not only improve and exalt the mind, but are themſelves improved and exalted to a much higher degree, than when employed upon profane ſubjects; the dignity and importance of the ideas and ſcenes drawn from religion adding a peculiar force and luſtre thereto. And, upon the whole, it will follow, that the polite arts are ſcarce to be allowed, except when conſecrated to religious purpoſes; but that here their cultivation may be made an excellent means of awakening and alarming our affections, and transferring them upon their true objects.

PROP.

PROP. LX.

To deduce practical Rules concerning the Purſuit of Science.

By the purſuit of ſcience I here mean the inveſtigation of ſuch truths, as offer themſelves in the ſtudy of the ſeveral branches of knowledge enumerated in the firſt part of this work; philology, mathematics, logic, hiſtory civil and natural, natural philoſophy, and theology, or divine philoſophy. Now here we may obſerve,

Firſt, That though the purſuit of truth be an entertainment and employment ſuitable to our rational natures, and a duty to him who is the *fountain of all knowledge and truth*, yet we muſt make frequent intervals and interruptions; elſe the ſtudy of ſcience, without a view to God and our duty, and from a vain deſire of applauſe, will get poſſeſſion of our hearts, engroſs them wholly, and by taking deeper root than the purſuit of vain amuſements, become in the end a much more dangerous and obſtinate evil than that. Nothing can eaſily exceed the vain-glory, ſelf-conceit, arrogance, emulation, and envy, that are found in the eminent profeſſors of the ſciences, mathematics, natural philoſophy, and even divinity itſelf. Temperance in theſe ſtudies is therefore evidently required, both in order to check the riſe of ſuch ill paſſions, and to give room for the cultivation of other eſſential parts of our natures. It is with theſe pleaſures as with the ſenſible ones; our appetites muſt not be made the meaſure of our indulgences; but we ought to refer all to an higher rule.

Secondly, When the purſuit of truth is directed by this higher rule, and entered upon with a view to the glory of God, and the good of mankind, there

there is no employment more worthy of our natures, or more conducive to their purification and perfection. Theſe are the *wiſe*, who in the *time of the end ſhall underſtand*, and make an *increaſe of knowledge*; who, by ſtudying and comparing together, the word and works of God, ſhall be enabled to illuſtrate and explain both; and who, *by turning many to righteouſneſs, ſhall* themſelves *ſhine as the ſtars for ever and ever.*

But we are not to confine this bleſſing to thoſe who are called *learned* men, in the uſual ſenſe of this word. Devotion, charity, prayer, have a wonderful influence upon thoſe who read the ſcriptures, and contemplate the works of creation, with a practical intention; and enable perſons otherwiſe illiterate, not only to ſee and feel the important truths therein manifeſted, for their own private purpoſes, but to preach and inculcate them upon others with ſingular efficacy and ſucceſs.

PROP. LXI.

To deduce practical Rules concerning the Ignorance, Difficulties, and Perplexities, in which we find ourſelves involved.

THESE are pains, which ought to be referred to the head of imagination, as above noted; and which therefore require to be conſidered here. But it muſt alſo be obſerved, that ſelf-intereſt has no ſmall ſhare in increaſing theſe pains; our ignorance and perplexity occaſioning the moſt exquiſite uneaſineſs to us in thoſe inſtances, where our future happineſs and miſery are at ſtake. Thus, in the difficulties which attend our inquiries into the origin of evil, free-will, the nature of our future exiſtence, the degree and duration of future puniſhment, and the moral attributes of God, our uneaſineſs ariſes not only

only from the darkneſs which ſurrounds theſe ſubjects, and the jarring of our concluſions, but from the great importance of theſe concluſions. The following practical rules deſerve our attention.

Firſt, To avoid all wrangling and contention, all bitterneſs and cenſorioufneſs, in ſpeaking or writing upon theſe ſubjects. This is a rule which ought to extend to all debates and inquiries upon every ſubject; but it is more peculiarly requiſite to be attended to in difficult ones of a religious nature; inaſmuch as theſe ill diſpoſitions of mind are moſt unſuitable to religion, and yet moſt apt to ariſe in abſtruſe and high ſpeculations; alſo as they increaſe the pains conſidered in this propoſition by being of a nature nearly related to them, *i. e.* by being attended with a nearly related ſtate of the brain.

Secondly, We ought to lay it down as certain, that this perplexity and uneaſineſs commenced with the fall, with the eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and that it can never be entirely removed till our readmiſſion to paradiſe, and to the tree whoſe leaves are for *the healing of the nations.* We muſt expect therefore, that, though humble and pious inquiries will always be attended with ſome ſucceſs and illumination, ſtill much darkneſs and ignorance will remain. And the expectation of this will contribute to make us eaſy under it.

Thirdly, The ſcriptures give us reaſon to hope, that this, as well as the reſt of our evils, will be removed in a future ſtate. We may therefore, if we labour to ſecure our happineſs in a future ſtate, enjoy, as it were by anticipation, this important part of it, that we ſhall then *ſee God and live, ſee him, though he be inviſible, ſee him as he is, and know as we are known.*

Laſtly, Of whatever kind or degree our perplexity be, an implicit confidence in the infinite power, knowledge, and goodneſs of God, which are

manifeſted, both in his word and works, in ſo great a variety of ways, is a certain refuge. If our ideas of the divine attributes be ſufficiently ſtrong and practical, their greatneſs and glorioufneſs, and the joy ariſing from them, will overpower any gloomineſs or diſſatisfaction, which a narrow and partial view of things may excite in us.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

OF THE REGARD DUE TO THE PLEASURES OF HONOUR, AND THE PAINS OF SHAME, IN FORMING THE RULE OF LIFE.

PROP. LXII.

The Pleaſures of Honour ought not to be made a primary Purſuit.

THIS may appear from the following conſiderations.

Firſt, Becauſe an eager deſire of, and endeavour after, the pleaſures of honour, has a manifeſt tendency to diſappoint itſelf. The merit of actions, *i. e.* that property of them for which they are extolled, and the agents loved and eſteemed, is, that they proceed from benevolence, or ſome religious or moral conſideration; whereas, if the deſire of praiſe be only in part the motive, we rather cenſure than commend. But, if praiſe be ſuppoſed the greateſt good, the deſire of it will prevail above the other deſires, and the perſon will by degrees be led on to vanity, ſelf-conceit, and pride, vices that are moſt contemptible in the ſight of all. *For whoſoever exalteth himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; and he that humbleth himſelf, ſhall be exalted.*

Secondly, What ſhall be the matter of the encomiums, if praiſe be the ſupreme good of the ſpecies? What is there, to which all can attain, and which all ſhall agree to commend and value? Not external advantages, ſuch as riches, beauty, ſtrength, &c. Theſe are neither in the power of all, nor univerſally commended. Not great talents, wit, ſaga-

city, memory, invention. Theſe, though more the ſubject of encomiums, yet fall to the lot of very few only. In ſhort, virtue alone is both univerſally eſteemed, and in the power of all, who are ſufficiently deſirous to attain it. But virtue cannot conſiſt with the purſuit of praiſe, much leſs with its being made a primary purſuit. It follows therefore, that it ought not to be made ſuch.

Thirdly, If it be ſaid, that thoſe who enjoy great external advantages, or are bleſt with happy talents, may perhaps purſue praiſe with ſucceſs; I anſwer, that the numberleſs competitions and ſuperiorities of others, follies and infirmities of a man's ſelf, miſtakes and jealouſies of thoſe from whom he expects praiſe, make this quite impoſſible in general. Nay, it is evident from the very nature of praiſe, which ſuppoſes ſomething extraordinary in the thing praiſed, that it cannot be the lot of many. So that he who purſues it, muſt either have a very good opinion of himſelf, which is a dangerous circumſtance in a ſeeker of praiſe, or allow that there are many chances againſt him.

Fourthly, If we recollect the hiſtory of theſe pleaſures delivered above, we ſhall ſee, that though children are pleaſed with encomiums upon any advantageous circumſtances that relate to them, yet this wears off by degrees; and, as we advance in life, we learn more and more to confine our pleaſures of this kind to things in our power (according to the common acceptation of theſe words), and to virtue. In like manner, the judicious part of mankind, *i. e.* thoſe whoſe praiſe is moſt valued, give it not except to virtue. Here then, again, is a moſt manifeſt ſubſerviency of theſe pleaſures to virtue. They not only tell us, that they are not our primary purſuit, or ultimate end, but alſo ſhew us what is.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, The early riſe of theſe pleaſures, and their declenſion in old age, for the moſt part, are arguments to the ſame purpoſe, and may be illuſtrated by the ſimilar obſervations made on the pleaſures of ſenſation and imagination, being not ſo obvious here as there.

Sixthly, There is ſomething extremely abſurd and ridiculous in ſuppoſing a perſon to be perpetually feaſting his own mind with, and dwelling upon, the praiſes that already are, or which he hopes will hereafter be, given to him. And yet, unleſs a man does this, which beſides would evidently incapacitate him for deſerving or obtaining praiſe, how can he fill up a thouſandth part of his time with the pleaſures of ambition?

Seventhly, Men that are much commended, preſently think themſelves above the level of the reſt of the world; and it is evident, that praiſe from inferiors wants much of that high reliſh, which ambitious men expect, or even that it diſguſts. It is even uneaſy and painful to a man to hear himſelf commended, though he may think it his due, by a perſon that is not qualified to judge. And, in this view of things, a truly philoſophic and religious mind ſees preſently, that all the praiſes of all mankind are very trivial and inſipid.

Eighthly, As the deſire of praiſe carries us perpetually from leſs to larger circles of applauders, at greater diſtances of time and place, ſo it neceſſarily inſpires us with an eager hope of a future life; and this hope alone is a conſiderable preſumption in favour of the thing hoped for. Now it will appear from numberleſs arguments, ſome of which are mentioned in theſe papers, that every evidence for a future life is alſo an evidence in favour of virtue, and of its ſuperior excellence as the end of life; and *vice verſa*. The pleaſures of ambition lead therefore, in this way alſo, from themſelves, ſince they

lead to thoſe of virtue. Let it be conſidered farther, that all reflections upon a future life, the new ſcenes which will be unfolded there, and the diſcovery which will then be made of *the ſecrets of all hearts*, muſt caſt a great damp upon every ambition, but a virtuous one; and beget great diffidence even in thoſe, who have the beſt teſtimony from their conſciences.

PROP. LXIII.

The Pleaſures of Honour may be obtained in their greateſt Degree, and higheſt Perfection, by paying a ſtrict Regard to the Precepts of Benevolence, Piety, and the moral Senſe.

THIS appears, in part, from what has been delivered under the laſt propoſition; but it may be farther confirmed by the following remarks.

Firſt, Benevolence, piety, and the moral ſenſe, engage men to obtain all ſuch qualifications, and to perform all ſuch actions, as are truly honourable. They preſerve them alſo from that oſtentation in reſpect both of theſe and other things, which would render them ridiculous and contemptible. Indeed honour is affixed by the bulk of mankind, after ſome experience of men and things, chiefly to acts of generoſity, compaſſion, public ſpirit, &c. *i. e.* to acts of benevolence, and the encomiums beſtowed upon ſuch acts are one of the principal ſources of the moral ſenſe. The *maximum* of honour muſt therefore coincide with benevolence, and the moral ſenſe, and conſequently with piety alſo, which is cloſely connected with them.

It may be objected here, that acts of direct piety are not, in general, honourable in this profane world; but, on the contrary, that they expoſe to the charges

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of enthuſiaſm, ſuperſtition, and folly; and this not only from the groſsly vicious, but, in ſome caſes, even from the bulk of mankind. And it muſt be allowed, that ſome deductions ought to be made on this account, but then let it be conſidered, that it is impoſſible to obtain the applauſes both of the good and the bad; that, as thoſe of the laſt ſcarce afford pleaſure to any, ſo their cenſure need not be feared; and that ſuch perſons as are truly devout, as regard God in all their actions, and men only in ſubordination to him, are not affected by the contempt and reproaches of the world; but, on the contrary, *rejoice when men revile them, and ſpeak all manner of evil againſt them falſely, for the ſake of Chriſt.* Let it be obſerved farther, that humility is the principal of all the qualifications which recommend men to the world; and that it is difficult, or even impoſſible, to attain this great virtue without piety, without a high veneration for the infinite majeſty of God, and a deep ſenſe of our own nothingneſs and vileneſs in his ſight; ſo that, in an indirect way, piety may be ſaid to contribute eminently to obtain the good opinion of the world.

Secondly, It is plain from the above delivered hiſtory of honour, as paid to external advantages, to bodily, intellectual, and moral accompliſhments, that happineſs of ſome kind or other, accruing to a man's ſelf, or to the world by his means, is the ſource of all honour, immediately or mediately. He therefore who is moſt happy in himſelf, and moſt the cauſe of happineſs to others, muſt in the end, from the very law of our natures, have the greateſt quantity of honourable aſſociations transferred upon him. But we have already ſhewn in part, and ſhall ſhew completely in the progreſs of this chapter, that benevolence, piety, and the moral ſenſe, are the only true, laſting foundations of private happineſs; and that the public happineſs ariſes from them, cannot be

doubted by any one. The benevolent, pious, and conſcientious perſon muſt therefore, when duly known, and rightly underſtood, obtain all the honour which men good or bad can beſtow; and, as the honour from the firſt is alone valuable, ſo he may expect to receive it early, as an immediate reward and ſupport to his preſent virtues, and an incitement to a daily improvement in them.

Thirdly, For the ſame reaſon that we deſire honour, eſteem, and approbation, from men, and particularly from the wiſe and good; we muſt deſire them from ſuperior good beings, and, above all, from God, the higheſt and beſt. Or, if we do not deſire this, it muſt ariſe from ſuch an inattention to the moſt real and important of all relations, as cannot conſiſt with true happineſs. Now a regard to benevolence, piety, and the moral ſenſe, is, by the confeſſion of all, the ſole foundation for obtaining this greateſt of honours, the approbation of God. We cannot indeed enjoy this in perfection, whilſt ſeparated from the inviſible world by this fleſhly tabernacle; but the teſtimony of a good conſcience gives us ſome foretaſte and anticipation of it. How vain and inſipid, in reſpect of this *eternal weight of glory*, are all the encomiums, which all mankind could beſtow!

PROP. LXIV.

To deduce practical Obſervations on the Nature of Humility, and the Methods of attaining it.

Here we may obſerve,

Firſt, That humility cannot require any man to think worſe of himſelf than according to truth and impartiality: this would be to ſet the virtues at variance with each other, and to found one of the moſt

moſt excellent of them, humility, in the baſe vice of falſehood.

Secondly, True humility conſiſts therefore in having right and juſt notions of our own accompliſhments and defects, of our own virtues and vices. For we ought not to deſcend lower than this by the foregoing paragraph; and to aſcend higher, would evidently be pride, as well as falſehood.

Thirdly, It follows, notwithſtanding this definition of humility, and even from it, that humble men, eſpecially in the beginning of a religious courſe, ought to be much occupied in conſidering and impreſſing upon themſelves their own miſery, imperfection, and ſinfulneſs, excluding as much as poſſible, all thoughts, and trains of thought, of a contrary nature; alſo in attending to the perfections of others, and rejecting the conſideration of their imperfections. For, ſince all thoughts which pleaſe are apt to recur frequently, and their contraries to be kept out of ſight, from the very frame of the mind, as appears from *Prop.* 22, *Cor.* 3. and other places of the firſt part of this work, it cannot but be, that all men in their natural ſtate, muſt be proud; they muſt, by dwelling upon their own perfections, and the imperfections of others, magnify theſe; by keeping out of view the contraries, diminiſh them, *i. e.* they muſt form too high opinions of themſelves, and too low ones of others, which is pride: and they cannot arrive at juſt and true opinions of themſelves and others, which is humility, but by reverſing the former ſteps, and impreſſing upon themſelves, their own imperfection and vileneſs, and the perfections of others, by expreſs acts of volition.

Fourthly, A truly humble man will avoid comparing himſelf with others; and when ſuch compariſons do ariſe in the mind, or are forced upon it, he will not think himſelf better than others. I do not mean, that thoſe who are eminent for knowledge or virtue, ſhould

ſhould not ſee and own their ſuperiority, in theſe reſpects, over perſons evidently ignorant and illiterate, or avowedly vicious. This cannot be avoided; but then this ſuperiority does not miniſter any food to pride, and a vain complacence in a man's own excellencies. Nor do I mean, that good men may not both humbly hope, that they themſelves are within the terms of ſalvation; and alſo fear, that the bulk of mankind are not; the firſt being a ſupport to their infant virtue, and a comfort allowed by God in their paſſage through this wilderneſs; the laſt a great ſecurity againſt infection from a wicked world. I only affirm, that every perſon, who is duly aware of his own ignorance, as to the ſecret cauſes of merit and demerit in himſelf and others, will firſt find himſelf incapable of judging between individuals; and then, if he has duly ſtudied his own imperfections, according to the laſt paragraph, he will not be apt to preſume in his own favour.

Fifthly, It is an inſeparable property of humility, not to ſeek the applauſes of the world; but to acquieſce in the reſpect paid by it, however diſproportionate this may be to the merit of the action under conſideration. For the contrary behaviour muſt produce endleſs inquietude, reſentment, envy, and ſelf-conceit.

Sixthly, It is, in like manner, inſeparable from true humility, to take ſhame to ourſelves where we have deſerved it, to acquieſce under it where we think we have not, and always to ſuſpect our own judgment in the laſt caſe. There is no way ſo ſhort and efficacious as this to mortify that pride, and overweening opinion of ourſelves, which is the reſult of our frame in this degenerate ſtate. Nay, we ought even to rejoice when we are meanly eſteemed, and deſpiſed, as having then an opportunity offered of imitating him who was *meek and lowly in heart*, and of *finding reſt to our ſouls* thereby.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, It may conduce to eradicate that tendency which every man has to think himſelf a nonpareil, in ſome reſpect or other, to conſider natural productions, flowers, fruits, gems, &c. It would be very abſurd to affirm of one of theſe, that it was a nonpareil of its kind, becauſe it is endued with great beauty and luſtre; much leſs therefore ought we to fancy this of that degree of beauty, parts, virtue, which happens to be our lot, and which is certainly magnified beyond the truth in our own eyes, from the intereſt which we have in ourſelves.

Eighthly, There is ſcarce a more effectual method of curbing oſtentation and ſelf-conceit, than frequently to impoſe upon one's ſelf a voluntary ſilence, and not to attempt to ſpeak, unleſs where a plain reaſon requires it. Voluntary ſilence is, in reſpect of oſtentation and ſelf-conceit, what faſting is, in reſpect of luxury and ſelf-indulgence. All perſons, who ſpeak much, and with pleaſure, intend to engage the attention, and gain the applauſe, of the audience; and have an high opinion of their own talents. And if this daily, I may ſay hourly, ſource and effect of vain-glory was cut off, we might with much greater facility get the victory over the reſt. When a perſon has, by this means, reduced himſelf to a proper indifference to the opinions of the world, he may by degrees abate of the rigour of his ſilence, and ſpeak naturally and eaſily, as occaſion offers, without any explicit motive; juſt as when faſting, and other ſeverities, have brought our appetites within due bounds, we may be directed by them in the choice and quantity of common wholeſome foods.

Ninthly, The doctrine of philoſophical free-will is the cauſe and ſupport of much pride and ſelf-conceit; and this ſo much the more, as it is a doctrine not only allowed, but even inſiſted upon and required, and made eſſential to the diſtinction between virtue and

and vice. Hence men are commanded, as it were, to ſet a value upon their own actions, by eſteeming them their own in the higheſt ſenſe of the words, and taking the merit of them to themſelves. For philoſophical free-will ſuppoſes, that God has given to each man a ſphere of action, in which he does not interpoſe; but leaves man to act entirely from himſelf, independently of his Creator; and as, upon this foundation, the aſſertors of philoſophical free-will aſcribe all the demerit of actions to men, ſo they are obliged to allow men to take the merit of good actions to themſelves, *i. e.* to be proud and ſelf-conceited. This is the plain conſequence of the doctrine of philoſophical free-will. How far this objection againſt it over-balances the objections brought againſt the oppoſite doctrine of mechaniſm, I do not here conſider. But it was neceſſary, in treating of the methods of attaining true humility, to ſhew in what relation the doctrine of free-will ſtood to this ſubject.

But we are not to ſuppoſe, that every man, who maintains philoſophical free-will, does alſo claim the merit of his good actions to himſelf. The ſcriptures are ſo full and explicit in aſcribing all that is good to God, and the heart of a good man concurs ſo readily with them, that he will rather expoſe himſelf to any perplexity of underſtanding, than to the charge of ſo great an impiety. Hence it is, that we ſee, in the writings of many good men, philoſophical free-will aſſerted, on one hand; and merit diſclaimed, on the other; in both caſes, with a view to avoid conſequences apparently impious; though it be impoſſible to reconcile theſe doctrines to each other. However, this ſubjection of the underſtanding to the moral principle is a noble inſtance of humility, and rectitude of heart.

As the aſſertors of philoſophical free-will are not neceſſarily proud, ſo the aſſertors of the doctrine of mechaniſm

mechaniſm are much leſs neceſſarily humble. For, however they may, in theory, aſcribe all to God; yet the aſſociations of life beget the idea and opinion of *ſelf* again and again, refer actions to this ſelf, and connect a variety of applauſes and complacencies with theſe actions. Nay, men may be proud of thoſe actions, which they directly and explicitly aſcribe to God, *i. e.* proud, that they are inſtruments in the hand of God for the performing ſuch actions. Thus the phariſee, in our Saviour's parable, though he thanked God, that he was no extortioner, &c. yet boaſted of this, and made it a foundation for deſpiſing the publican. However, the frequent recollection, that all our actions proceed from God; that we have nothing which we did not receive from him; that there can be no reaſon in ourſelves, why he ſhould ſelect one, rather than another, for an inſtrument of his glory in this world, &c. and the application of theſe important truths to the various real circumſtances of our lives; muſt greatly accelerate our progreſs to humility and ſelf-annihilation. And, when men are far advanced in this ſtate, they may enjoy quiet and comfort, notwithſtanding their paſt ſins and frailties; for they approach to the paradiſiacal ſtate, in which our firſt parents, though naked, were not aſhamed. But the greateſt caution is requiſite here, leſt by a freſh diſobedience we come to know evil as well as good again, and, by deſiring to be gods, to be independent, make the return of ſhame, puniſhment, and myſtical death, neceſſary for our readmiſſion to the tree of life.

Tenthly, It will greatly recommend humility to us, to conſider how much miſery a diſpoſition to glory in our ſuperiority over others may hereafter occaſion. Let it be obſerved therefore, that every finite perfection, how great ſoever, is at an infinitely greater diſtance from the infinite perfection of God, than from nothing; ſo that every finite being may have,

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and probably has, infinitely more ſuperiors than inferiors. But the ſame diſpoſition, which makes him glory over his inferiors, muſt make him envy his ſuperiors: he will therefore have, from this his diſpoſition, infinitely more cauſe to grieve, than to rejoice. And it appears, from this way of conſidering things, that nothing could enable us to bear the luſtre of the inviſible world, were it opened to our view, but humility, ſelf-annihilation, and the love of God, and of his creatures, in and through him.

Eleventhly, If we may be allowed to ſuppoſe all God's creatures ultimately and indefinitely happy, according to the third ſuppoſition made above for explaining the infinite goodneſs of God, this would unite the profoundeſt humility with the higheſt gratification of our deſires after honour. For this makes all God's creatures equal in the eye of their Creator; and therefore, as it obliges us to call the vileſt worm our ſiſter, ſo it transfers upon us the glory of the brighteſt archangel; we are all equally made *to inherit all things*, are all equally *heirs of God, and coheirs with Chriſt.*

SECT.

SECT. V.

OF THE REGARD DUE TO THE PLEASURES AND PAINS OF SELF-INTEREST IN FORMING THE RULE OF LIFE.

PROP. LXV.

The Pleaſures of Self-intereſt ought not to be made a primary Purſuit.

SELF-INTEREST is of three kinds, as has been already explained, viz.

Firſt, Groſs ſelf-intereſt, or the purſuit of the means for obtaining the pleaſures of ſenſation, imagination, and ambition.

Secondly, Refined ſelf-intereſt, or the purſuit of the means for obtaining the pleaſures of ſympathy, theopathy, and the moral ſenſe.

Thirdly, Rational ſelf-intereſt, or the purſuit of ſuch things, as are believed to be the means for obtaining our greateſt poſſible happineſs, at the ſame time that we are ignorant, or do not conſider, from what particular ſpecies of pleaſure this our greateſt poſſible happineſs will ariſe.

Now it is my deſign, under this propoſition, to ſhew, that none of theſe three kinds of ſelf-intereſt ought to be cheriſhed and indulged as the law of our natures, and the end of life; and that even rational ſelf-intereſt is allowable, only when it tends to reſtrain other purſuits, that are more erroneous, and deſtructive of our true happineſs.

I begin with the arguments againſt groſs ſelf-intereſt.

Firſt,

Firſt, then, We ought not to purſue the means for obtaining the pleaſures of ſenſation, imagination, and ambition, primarily, becauſe theſe pleaſures themſelves ought not to be made primary purſuits, as has been ſhewn in the three laſt ſections. The means borrow all their luſtre from the ends by aſſociation; and, if the original luſtre of the ends be not ſufficient to juſtify our making them a primary purſuit, the borrowed one of the means cannot. In like manner, if the original luſtre be a falſe light, an *ignis fatuus*, that miſleads and ſeduces us, the borrowed one muſt miſlead and ſeduce alſo. And indeed, though we ſometimes reſt in the means for obtaining the pleaſures of ſenſation, imagination, and ambition, and deſire riches, poſſeſſions of other kinds, power, privileges, accompliſhments, bodily and mental, for their own ſakes, as it were; yet, for the moſt part, they introduce an explicit regard to theſe exploded pleaſures, and conſequently muſt increaſe the corruption and falſe cravings, of our minds; and, if they did not, their borrowed luſtre would gradually languiſh, and die away, ſo that they would ceaſe to excite deſire. It is to be added, that, if they be conſidered and purſued as means, they will be uſed as ſuch, *i. e.* will actually involve us in the enjoyment of unlawful pleaſures.

Secondly, The treaſuring up the means of happineſs bears a very near relation to ambition. Thoſe who deſire great degrees of riches, power, learning, &c. deſire alſo that their acquiſitions ſhould be known to the world. Men have a great ambition to be thought happy, and to have it in their power to gratify themſelves at pleaſure; and this oſtentatious deſign is one principal motive for acquiring all the ſuppoſed means of happineſs. The reaſons therefore, which exclude ambition, muſt contribute to exclude ſelf-intereſt alſo.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Groſs ſelf-intereſt has a manifeſt tendency to deprive us of the pleaſures of ſympathy, and to expoſe us to its pains. Rapaciouſneſs extinguiſhes all ſparks of good-will and generoſity, and begets endleſs reſentments, jealouſies, and envies. And indeed a great part of the contentions, and mutual injuries, which we ſee in the world, ariſe, becauſe either one or both of the contending parties deſire more than an equitable ſhare of the means of happineſs. It is to be added, that groſs ſelf-intereſt has a peculiar tendency to increaſe itſelf from the conſtant recurrency, and conſequent augmentation, of the ideas and deſires that relate to *ſelf*, and the excluſion of thoſe that relate to others.

Now this inconſiſtency of groſs ſelf-intereſt with ſympathy would be ſome argument againſt it, barely upon ſuppoſition, that ſympathy was one neceſſary part of our natures, and which ought to have an equal ſhare with ſenſation, imagination, and ambition; but as it now begins to appear from the excluſion of theſe, and other arguments, that more than an equal ſhare is due to ſympathy, the oppoſition between them becomes a ſtill ſtronger argument againſt ſelf-intereſt.

Fourthly, There is, in like manner, an evident oppoſition between groſs ſelf-intereſt, and the pleaſures of theopathy, and of the moral ſenſe, and, by conſequence, an inſuperable objection to its being made our primary purſuit, deducible from theſe eſſential parts of our nature.

Fifthly, Groſs ſelf-intereſt, when indulged, devours many of the pleaſures of ſenſation, and moſt of thoſe of imagination and ambition, *i. e.* many of the pleaſures from which it takes its riſe. This is peculiarly true and evident in the love of money; but it holds alſo, in a certain degree, with reſpect to the other ſelfiſh purſuits. It muſt therefore deſtroy itſelf in part, as well as the pleaſures of ſympathy,

theopathy, and the moral ſenſe, with the refined ſelf-intereſt grounded thereon. And thus it happens, that in very avaricious perſons nothing remains but ſenſuality, ſenſual ſelfiſhneſs, and an uneaſy hankering after money, which is a more imperfect ſtate, than that in which they were at their firſt ſetting off in infancy. Some of the ſtronger and more ordinary ſenſible pleaſures and pains, with the deſires after them, muſt remain in the moſt ſordid, as long as they carry their bodies about with them, and are ſubjected to the cravings of the natural appetites, and to the impreſſions of external objects. But a violent paſſion for money gets the better of all reliſh for the elegancies and amuſements of life, of the deſire of honour, love, and eſteem, and even of many of the ſenſual gratifications. Now it cannot be, that a purſuit which is ſo oppoſite to all the parts of our nature, ſhould be intended by the author of it for our primary one.

Sixthly, Men, in treaſuring up the means of happineſs without limits, ſeem to go upon the ſuppoſition, that their capacity of enjoying happineſs is infinite; and conſequently that the ſtock of happineſs, laid up for them to enjoy hereafter, is proportional to the ſtock of means, which they have amaſſed together. But our capacity for enjoying happineſs is narrow and fluctuating; and there are many periods, during which no objects, however grateful to others, can afford us pleaſure, on account of the diſorder of our bodies or minds. If the theory of theſe papers be admitted, it furniſhes us with an eaſy explanation of this matter, by ſhewing that our capacity for receiving pleaſure depends upon our aſſociations, and upon the ſtate of the medullary ſubſtance of the brain; and conſequently that it muſt fail often, and correſpond very imperfectly to the objects, which are uſually called pleaſurable ones.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, It is very evident in fact, that self-intereſted men are not more happy than their neighbours, whatever means of happineſs they may poſſeſs. I preſume indeed, that experience ſupports the reaſoning already alleged; but, however that be, it certainly ſupports the concluſion. Nay, one ought to ſay, that covetous men are, in general, remarkably miſerable. The hardſhips, cares, fears, ridicule and contempt, to which they ſubject themſelves, appear to be greater evils, than what fall to the ſhare of mankind at an average.

Eighthly, One may put this whole matter in a ſhort and obvious light, thus: the purſuit of the means of happineſs cannot be the primary one, becauſe, if all be means, what becomes of the end? Means, as means, can only be pleaſant in a derivative way from the end. If the end be ſeldom or never obtained, the pleaſure of the means muſt languiſh. The intellectual pleaſures, that are become ends by the entire coaleſcence of the aſſociated particulars, fade from being diluted with the mixture of neutral circumſtances, unleſs they be perpetually recruited. A ſelfiſh expectation therefore, which is never gratified, muſt gradually languiſh.

I come now, in the ſecond place, to ſhew that refined ſelf-intereſt, or the purſuit of the means for obtaining the pleaſures of ſympathy, theopathy, and the moral ſenſe, ought not to be made a primary purſuit.

A perſon who is arrived at this refined ſelf-intereſt, muſt indeed be advanced ſome ſteps higher in the ſcale of perfection, than thoſe who are immerſed in groſs ſelf-intereſt; inaſmuch as this perſon muſt have overcome, in ſome meaſure, the groſs pleaſures of ſenſation, imagination, and ambition, with the groſs ſelf-intereſt thereon depending, and have made ſome conſiderable progreſs in ſympathy, theopathy, and the moral ſenſe, before he can make it a queſtion whether the purſuit of refined ſelf-intereſt ought

to be his primary purſuit or no. However, that it ought not, that this would detain him, and even bring him lower in the ſcale of perfection, will appear from the following reaſons.

Firſt, Many of the objections which have been brought againſt groſs ſelf-intereſt, retain their force againſt the refined, though in a leſs degree. Thus refined ſelf-intereſt puts us upon treaſuring up the ſame means as the groſs; for the perſons, who are influenced by it, conſider riches, power, learning, &c. as means of doing good to men, bringing glory to God, and enjoying comfortable reflections in their own minds in conſequence thereof. But the deſire of riches, power, learning, muſt introduce ambition, and other defilements, from the many corrupt aſſociations that adhere to them. In like manner, refined ſelf-intereſt has, like the groſs, a tendency to deſtroy the very pleaſures from which it took its riſe, *i. e.* the pleaſures of ſympathy, theopathy, and the moral ſenſe; it cannot afford happineſs, unleſs the mind and body be properly diſpoſed; it does not, in fact, make men happy; but is the parent of diſſatisfaction, murmurings, and aridity; and, being profeſſedly the purſuit of a bare means, involves the abſurdity of having no real end in view. It may not be improper here for the reader juſt to review the objections made above to groſs ſelf-intereſt.

Secondly, Refined ſelf-intereſt, when indulged, is a much deeper and more dangerous error than the groſs, becauſe it ſhelters itſelf under ſympathy, theopathy, and the moral ſenſe, ſo as to grow through their protection; whereas the groſs ſelf-intereſt, being avowedly contrary to them, is often ſtifled by the increaſe of benevolence and compaſſion, of the love and fear of God, and of the ſenſe of duty to him.

Thirdly, It is allied to, and, as it were, part of the foregoing objection, which yet deſerves a particular

cular conſideration, that the pride attending on refined ſelf-intereſt, when carried to a certain height, is of an incorrigible, and, as it were, diabolical nature. And, upon the whole, we may obſerve, that as groſs ſelf-intereſt, when it gets poſſeſſion of a man, puts him into a lower condition than the mere ſenſual brutal one, in which he was born; ſo refined ſelf-intereſt, when that gets poſſeſſion, depreſſes him ſtill farther, even to the very confines of hell. However, it is ſtill to be remembered, that ſome degree muſt ariſe in the beginning of a religious courſe; and that this, if it be watched and reſiſted, is an argument of our advancement in piety and virtue. But the beſt things, when corrupted, often become the worſt.

I come now, in the laſt place, to conſider what objections lie againſt rational ſelf-intereſt, as our primary purſuit.

Now here it may be alleged, Firſt, That as we cannot but deſire any particular pleaſure propoſed to us, as long as the aſſociations, which formed it, ſubſiſt in due ſtrength; ſo, when any thing is believed to be the means of attaining our greateſt poſſible happineſs, the whole frame of our acquired nature puts us upon purſuing it. Rational ſelf-intereſt muſt therefore always have a neceſſary influence over us.

Secondly, It may be alleged, that I have myſelf made rational ſelf-intereſt the baſis of the preſent inquiry after the rule of life, having ſuppoſed all along, that our greateſt poſſible happineſs is the object of this rule.

And it certainly follows hence, that rational ſelf-intereſt is to be put upon a very different footing from that of the groſs and refined; agreeably to which the ſcriptures propoſe general and indefinite hopes and fears, and eſpecially thoſe of a future ſtate, and inculcate them as good and proper motives of action. But then, on the other hand, the

ſcriptures inculcate many other motives, diſtinct from hope and fear; ſuch as the love of God and our neighbour, the law of our minds, &c. *i. e.* the motives of ſympathy, theopathy, and the moral ſenſe, as explained in this work. And we may ſee from the reaſoning uſed in reſpect of groſs and refined ſelf-intereſt, that a conſtant attention to that which is the moſt pure and rational, to the moſt general hopes and fears, would extinguiſh our love of God and our neighbour, as well as the other particular deſires, and augment the ideas and deſires, which centre immediately and directly in *ſelf*, to a monſtrous height. Rational ſelf-intereſt may therefore be ſaid to lie between the impure motives of ſenſation, imagination, ambition, groſs ſelf-intereſt, and refined ſelf-intereſt, on the one hand, and the pure ones of ſympathy, theopathy, and the moral ſenſe, on the other; ſo that when it reſtrains the impure ones, or cheriſhes the pure, it may be reckoned a virtue; when it cheriſhes the impure, or damps the pure, a vice. Now there are inſtances of both kinds, of the firſt in groſsly vicious perſons, of the laſt in thoſe that have made conſiderable advancement in piety and virtue. In like manner the impure motives of ſenſation, imagination, &c. differ in degree of impurity from each other; and therefore may be either virtues or vices, in a relative way of ſpeaking. It ſeems, however, moſt convenient, upon the whole, to make rational ſelf-intereſt the middle point; and this, with all the other reaſoning of this paragraph, may ſerve to ſhew, that it ought not to be cultivated primarily. But I ſhall have occaſion to conſider this matter farther under the next propoſition but one, when I come to deduce practical obſervations on ſelf-intereſt and ſelf-annihilation.

It may be reckoned a part of the groſs and refined ſelf-intereſts, to ſecure ourſelves againſt the hazards

of

of falling into the pains of the other ſix claſſes, and a part of rational ſelf-intereſt, to provide againſt our greateſt danger; and it might be ſhewn in like manner, that neither ought theſe to be primary purſuits.

PROP. LXVI.

A ſtrict Regard to the Precepts of Benevolence, Piety, and the moral Senſe, favours even groſs Self-intereſt; and is the only Method, by which the refined and rational can be ſecured.

HERE we may obſerve,

Firſt, That ſince the regard to benevolence, piety, and the moral ſenſe, procures the pleaſures of ſenſation, imagination, and ambition, in their greateſt perfection for the moſt part; it muſt favour groſs ſelf-intereſt, or the purſuit of the means of theſe.

Secondly, This regard has, in many caſes, an immediate tendency to procure theſe means, *i. e.* to procure riches, power, learning, &c. And though it happens ſometimes, that a man muſt forego both the means for obtaining pleaſure, and pleaſure itſelf, from a regard to duty; and happens often, that the beſt men have not the greateſt ſhare of the means; yet it ſeems that the beſt men have, in general, the faireſt proſpect for that competency, which is moſt ſuitable to real enjoyment. Thus, in trades and profeſſions, though it ſeldom is obſerved, that men eminent for piety and charity amaſs great wealth (which indeed could not well conſiſt with theſe virtues); yet they are generally in affluent or eaſy circumſtances, from the faithful diſcharge of duty, their prudence, moderation in expences, &c. and ſcarce ever in indigent ones. A ſenſe of duty begets a deſire to diſcharge it; this recommends to the world, to the bad as well as to the good; and, where there

are inſtances apparently to the contrary, farther information will, for the moſt part, diſcover ſome ſecret pride, negligence, or imprudence, *i. e.* ſomething contrary to duty, to which the perſon's ill ſucceſs in reſpect of this world may be aſcribed.

Thirdly, A regard to duty plainly gives the greateſt capacity for enjoyment; as it ſecures us againſt thoſe diſorders of body and mind, which render the natural objects of pleaſure inſipid or ungrateful.

Fourthly, As to refined ſelf-intereſt, or the purſuit of the means for obtaining the pleaſures of ſympathy, theopathy, and the moral ſenſe, it appears at firſt ſight, that a due regard to theſe muſt procure for us both the end, and the means.

Fifthly, However the groſs or refined ſelf-intereſt may, upon certain occaſions, be diſappointed, the rational one never can, whilſt we act upon a principle of duty. Our future happineſs muſt be ſecured thereby. This the profane and profligate, as far as they have any belief of God, providence, or a future ſtate (and I preſume, that no one could ever arrive at more than ſcepticiſm and uncertainty in theſe things), allow, as well as the devout and pious chriſtian. And, when the rational ſelf-intereſt is thus ſecured, the diſappointments of the other two become far leſs grievous, make far leſs impreſſion upon the mind. He that has a certain reverſion of an infinite and eternal inheritance, may be very indifferent about preſent poſſeſſions.

PROP. LXVII.

To deduce practical Obſervations on Self-intereſt and Self-annihilation.

SELF-INTEREST being reckoned by ſome writers the only ſtable point upon which a ſyſtem of morality can be erected, and ſelf-annihilation by others the

the only one in which man can reſt, I will here endeavour to reconcile theſe two opinions, giving at the ſame time both a general deſcription of what paſſes in our progreſs from ſelf-intereſt to ſelf-annihilation, and ſome ſhort hints of what is to be approved or condemned in this practice.

Firſt, then, The vicious pleaſures of ſenſation, imagination, and ambition, being often very expenſive, are checked by the groſſeſt of all the ſelf-intereſts, the mere love of money; and the principle upon which men act in this caſe is eſteemed one ſpecies of prudence. This may be tolerated in others, where it is not in our power to infuſe a better motive; but, in a man's ſelf, it is very abſurd to have recourſe to one, which muſt leave ſo great a defilement, when others that are purer and ſtronger, rational ſelf-intereſt particularly, are at hand.

Secondly, The deſire of bodily and mental accompliſhments, learning particularly, conſidered as means of happineſs, often checks both the forementioned vicious pleaſures, and the love of money. Now this kind of ſelf-intereſt is preferable to the laſt indeed; but it cannot be approved by any that are truly ſolicitous about their own reformation and purification.

Thirdly, Groſs ſelf-intereſt ſometimes excites perſons to external acts of benevolence, and even of piety; and though there is much hypocriſy always in theſe caſes, yet an imperfect benevolence or piety is ſometimes generated in this way. However, one cannot but condemn this procedure in the higheſt degree.

Fourthly, As refined ſelf-intereſt ariſes from benevolence, piety, and the moral ſenſe; ſo, converſely, it promotes them in various ways. But, then, as it likewiſe checks their growth in various other ways, it cannot be allowed in many caſes, and is, upon the whole, rather to be condemned than approved. More favour may be ſhewn to it, where it reſtrains the

the vicious pleaſures of ſenſation, imagination, and ambition.

Fifthly, Rational ſelf-intereſt puts us upon all the proper methods of checking the laſt-named vicious pleaſures with groſs and refined ſelf-intereſt, and begetting in ourſelves the virtuous diſpoſitions of benevolence, piety, and the moral ſenſe. This part of our progreſs is extremely to be approved, and eſpecially the laſt branch of it.

Sixthly, The virtuous diſpoſitions of benevolence, piety, and the moral ſenſe, and particularly that of the love of God, check all the foregoing ones, and ſeem ſufficient utterly to extinguiſh them at laſt. This would be perfect ſelf-annihilation, and reſting in God as our centre. And, upon the whole, we may conclude, that though it be impoſſible to begin without ſenſuality, and ſenſual ſelfiſhneſs, or to proceed without the other intermediate principles, and particularly that of rational ſelf-intereſt; yet we ought never to be ſatisfied with ourſelves, till we arrive at perfect ſelf-annihilation, and the pure love of God.

We may obſerve alſo, that the method of deſtroying *ſelf*, by perpetually ſubſtituting a leſs and purer ſelf-intereſt for a larger and groſſer, correſponds to ſome mathematical methods of obtaining quantities to any required degree of exactneſs, by leaving a leſs and leſs error *ſine limite*. And though abſolute exactitude may not be poſſible in the firſt caſe, any more than in the laſt; yet a degree ſufficient for future happineſs is certainly attainable by a proper uſe of the events of this life.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

OF THE REGARD DUE TO THE PLEASURES AND PAINS OF SYMPATHY IN FORMING THE RULE OF LIFE.

PROP. LXVIII.

The Pleaſures of Sympathy improve thoſe of Senſation, Imagination, Ambition, and Self-intereſt; and unite with thoſe of Theopathy, and the moral Senſe; they are ſelf-conſiſtent, and admit of an unlimited Extent: they may therefore be our primary Purſuit.

THAT the pleaſures of ſympathy improve thoſe of ſenſation, imagination, ambition, and ſelf-intereſt, by limiting and regulating them, appears from the four laſt ſections.

Their union and entire coincidence with thoſe of theopathy are evident, inaſmuch as we are led by the love of good men to that of God, and back again by the love of God to that of all his creatures in and through him; alſo as it muſt be the will of an infinitely benevolent being, that we ſhould cultivate univerſal unlimited benevolence.

In like manner, they may be proved to unite and coincide with the pleaſures of the moral ſenſe, both becauſe they are one principal ſource of the moral ſenſe, and becauſe this, in its turn, approves of and enforces them entirely.

In order to prove their unlimited extent, let us ſuppoſe, as we did before of ſenſation, that a perſon took all opportunities of gratifying his benevolent deſires;

deſires; that he made it his ſtudy, pleaſure, ambition, and conſtant employment, either to promote happineſs, or leſſen miſery, to *go about doing good.*

Firſt, then, It is very plain, that ſuch a perſon would have a very large field of employment. The relations of life, conjugal, parental, filial, to friends, ſtrangers, enemies, to ſuperiors, equals, inferiors, and even to brutes, and the neceſſities of each, are ſo numerous, that, if we were not greatly wanting in benevolent affections, we ſhould have no want of fit objects for them.

Secondly, As the occaſions are ſufficient to engage our time, ſo we may, in general, expect ſucceſs. Not only the perſons themſelves, to whom we intend to do ſervice, may be expected to concur, but others alſo, in general; inaſmuch as benevolence gains the love and eſteem of the beholders, has a perſuaſiveneſs and prevalence over them, and engages them to co-operate towards its ſucceſs. It is very neceſſary indeed, that all benevolent perſons ſhould guard againſt the ſallies of pride, ſelf-will, and paſſion, in themſelves, *i. e.* take care that their benevolence be pure; alſo that it be improved by piety, and the moral ſenſe; elſe it is probable, that they will meet with many diſappointments. But this is no argument againſt the unlimited nature of benevolence: it only tends to exclude the mixture and defilement of ill diſpoſitions; and to ſhew the neceſſary connection of the love of their neighbour with that of God, and with the divine ſignature of conſcience, which I all along contend for. When our benevolence is thus pure, and thus directed, it will ſeldom fail of gaining its purpoſe. And yet diſappointments muſt ſometimes happen to the pureſt benevolence; elſe our love of God, and reſignation to his will, which is the higheſt principle of all, could not be brought to perfection. But then this will happen ſo rarely as to make no alteration in our

our reaſonings, with reſpect to the general ſtate of things; which kind of reaſoning and certainty is all that we are qualified for in our preſent condition.

Thirdly, As the benevolent perſon may expect both ſufficient employment and ſucceſs, in general; ſo it does not appear from the experience of thoſe who make the trial, that the reliſh for theſe pleaſures languiſhes, as in other caſes; but, on the contrary, that it gathers ſtrength from gratification. We hear men complaining frequently of the vanity and deceitfulneſs of the other pleaſures after poſſeſſion and gratification, but never of thoſe of benevolence, when improved by religion, and the moral ſenſe. On the contrary, theſe pleaſures are greater in enjoyment than expectation; and continue to pleaſe in reflection, and after enjoyment. And the foregoing hiſtory of aſſociation may enable us to diſcover how this comes to paſs. Since the pleaſures of benevolence are, in general, attended with ſucceſs, and are conſiſtent with, and productive of, the ſeveral inferior pleaſures in their due degree, as I have already ſhewn, and alſo are farther illuminated by the moral and religious pleaſures, it is plain, that they muſt receive freſh recruits upon every gratification, and therefore increaſe perpetually, when cultivated as they ought to be.

The ſelf-conſiſtency of benevolence appears from the peculiar harmony, love, eſteem, and mutual co-operation, that prevail amongſt benevolent perſons; alſo from the tendency that acts of benevolence, proceeding from *A* to *B*, have to excite correſpondent ones reciprocally from *B* to *A*, and ſo on indefinitely. We may obſerve farther, that, when benevolence is arrived at a due height, all our deſires and fears, all our ſenſibilities for ourſelves, are more or leſs transferred upon others by our love and compaſſion for them; and, in like mannner, that when

when our moral ſenſe is ſufficiently eſtabliſhed and improved, when we become influenced by what is fit and right, our imperfect ſenſibility for others leſſens our exorbitant concern for ourſelves by being compared with it, at the ſame time that compaſſion takes off our thoughts from ourſelves. And thus benevolence to a ſingle perſon may ultimately become equal to ſelf-intereſt, by this tendency of ſelf-intereſt to increaſe benevolence, and reciprocally of benevolence to leſſen ſelf-intereſt; though ſelf-intereſt was at firſt infinitely greater than benevolence, *i. e.* we, who come into the world entirely ſelfiſh, earthly, and *children of wrath*, may at laſt be exalted to *the glorious liberty of the ſons of God*, by learning to love our neighbours as ourſelves: we may learn to be as much concerned for others as for ourſelves, and as little concerned for ourſelves, as for others; both which things tend to make benevolence and ſelf-intereſt equal, however unequal they were at firſt.

And now a new ſcene begins to open itſelf to our view. Let us ſuppoſe, that the benevolence of *A* is very imperfect; however, that it conſiderably exceeds his malevolence; ſo that he receives pleaſure, upon the whole, from the happineſs of *B*, *C*, *D*, &c. *i. e.* from that of the ſmall circle of thoſe, whom he has already learnt to call his neighbours. Let us ſuppoſe alſo, that *B*, *C*, *D*, &c. though affected with a variety of pains, as well as pleaſures, are yet happy, upon the whole; and that *A*, though he does not ſee this balance of happineſs clearly, yet has ſome comfortable general knowledge of it. This then is the happineſs of good men in this preſent imperfect ſtate; and it is evident, that they are great gainers, upon the whole, from their benevolence. At the ſame time it gives us a faint conception of *A*'s unbounded happineſs, on ſuppoſition that he conſidered every man as his friend, his ſon, his neighbour, his ſecond ſelf, and loved him as himſelf; and

and that his neighbour was exalted to the ſame unbounded happineſs as himſelf by the ſame unlimited benevolence. Thus *A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, &c. would all become, as it were, new ſets of ſenſes, and perceptive powers, to each other, ſo as to increaſe each other's happineſs without limits; they would all become *members of the myſtical body of Chriſt*; all have an equal care for each other; all increaſe in love, and come to their *full ſtature*, to perfect manhood, *by that which every joint ſupplieth*: happineſs would circulate through this myſtical body without end, ſo as that each particle of it would, in due time, arrive at each individual point, or ſentient being, of the great whole, that each would *inherit all things*.

To ſtrengthen our preſumptions in favour of benevolence, as the primary purſuit of life, ſtill more; let it be conſidered, that its pleaſures lie open to all kinds and degrees of men, ſince every man has it in his power to benefit others, however ſuperior or inferior, and ſince we all ſtand in need of each other. And the difference which nature has put between us and the brutes, in making us ſo much more dependent upon, and neceſſary to, each other from the cradle to the grave, for life, health, convenience, pleaſure, education, and intellectual accompliſhments, ſo much leſs able to ſubſiſt ſingly, or even in ſmall bodies, than the brutes, may be conſidered as one mark of the ſuperior excellence of the ſocial pleaſures to man. All the tendencies of the events of life, ordinary and extraordinary, of the relations of life, of the foregoing pleaſures and pains, to connect us to each other, to convert accidental, natural, inſtituted aſſociations into permanent coaleſcenſes (for all this is effected by the power of aſſociation ſo much ſpoken of in theſe papers), ſo that two ill men can ſcarce become known to each other familiarly, without conceiving ſome love, tenderneſs, compaſſion, complacence for each other, are arguments to the

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ſame purpoſe. And our love to relations and friends, that have particular failings, teaches us to be more candid towards others, who have the like failings. At the ſame time it ſhews the conſiſtency of benevolence with itſelf, and its tendency to improve itſelf; that we love, eſteem, aſſiſt, and encourage the benevolent more than others; ſo that a benevolent action not only excites the receiver to a grateful return, but alſo the by-ſtander to approve and reward; and the benevolent man receives an hundred fold even in this world. But it would be endleſs to purſue this. Benevolence is indeed the grand deſign and purport of human life, of the preſent probationary ſtate; and therefore every circumſtance of human life muſt point to it, directly or indirectly, when duly conſidered.

Cor. 1. Since benevolence now appears to be a primary purſuit, it follows, that all the pleaſures of malevolence are forbidden, as being ſo many direct hinderances and bars to our happineſs. The pleaſures of ſenſation, imagination, ambition, and ſelf-intereſt, may all be made conſiſtent with benevolence, when limited by, and made ſubject to it, at leaſt in this imperfect ſtate; but thoſe of malevolence are quite incompatible with it. As far as malevolence is allowed, benevolence muſt be deſtroyed; they are heat and cold, light and darkneſs, to each other. There is, however, this exception; that where wiſhing evil to ſome, diſpoſes us to be more benevolent upon the whole, as in the caſe of what is called a juſt indignation againſt vice, it may perhaps be tolerable in the more imperfect kinds of men, who have need of this direction and incitement to keep them from wandering out of the proper road, and to help them forward in it. But it is extremely dangerous to encourage ſuch a diſpoſition of mind by ſatire, invective, diſpute, however unworthy the opponent may be, as theſe practices generally end in rank malevolence

malevolence at laſt. *The wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God.*

Cor. 2. As we muſt forego the pleaſures of malevolence, ſo we muſt patiently and reſolutely endure the pains of benevolence, particularly thoſe of compaſſion. But we ſhall not be loſers upon either of theſe accounts. The pleaſures of the moral ſenſe, which reſult from theſe virtues, will in the firſt caſe compenſate for what we forego, and in the laſt overbalance what we endure. Beſides which, mercy and forgiveneſs are themſelves pleaſures, and productive of many others in the event; and compaſſion generally puts us upon ſuch methods, as both make the afflicted to rejoice, and beget in ourſelves a ſtronger diſpoſition to rejoice with them. However, we may learn from theſe two corollaries, that as our paſſage through the four inferior, and, as it were forbidden, claſſes of pleaſure and pain, is not entire ſelf-denial and ſufferance, ſo ſome degrees of theſe are neceſſary in reſpect of the three ſuperior claſſes. We muſt *weep with thoſe that weep*, as well as *rejoice with thoſe that rejoice*. In like manner, theopathy, and the moral ſenſe, are the occaſions of ſome pain, as well as of great and laſting pleaſure; as will appear hereafter. Now all this mixture of pain with pleaſure in each claſs, as alſo the difficulty which we find in bringing the inferior claſſes into a due ſubordination to the ſuperior, are conſequences and marks of our fallen and degenerate ſtate.

Cor. 3. As benevolence is thus ſupported by many direct arguments, ſo there are ſimilar and oppoſite arguments, which ſhew that malevolence is the bane of human happineſs; that it occaſions miſery to the doer, as well as to the ſufferer; that it is infinitely inconſiſtent with itſelf, and with the courſe of nature; and that it is impoſſible, that it ſhould ſubſiſt for ever. Now theſe become ſo many indirect ones for benevolence, and for our making it the

ſupreme pleaſure and end of our lives. In order to make this appear more fully, let us take a ſurvey of human life on the reverſe ſide to that which we have before conſidered. We ſhall there ſee, that injuries are increaſed in various ways by reciprocation, till at laſt mutual ſufferings oblige both parties to deſiſt; that the courſe and conſtitution of nature give us numberleſs admonitions to forbear; and that the hand of every man, and the power of every thing, are againſt the malevolent: ſo that, if we ſhould ſuppoſe the beings *A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, &c. to be purely malevolent, to have each of them an indefinite number of enemies, they would firſt ceaſe from their enmity on account of their mutual ſufferings, and become purely ſelfiſh, each being his own ſole friend and protector; and afterwards, by mutual good offices, endear themſelves to each other; ſo that at laſt each would have an indefinite number of friends, *i. e.* be indefinitely happy. This is indeed a kind of ſuppoſition; but its obvious correſpondence with what we ſee and feel in real life, is a ſtrong argument both of the infinite goodneſs of God, and of the conſequent doctrine of the tendency of all beings to unlimited happineſs through benevolence. For the beings *A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, &c. could no more ſtop at pure ſelfiſhneſs, or any other intermediate point, than they could reſt in pure malevolence. And thus the arguments, which exclude pure malevolence, neceſſarily infer pure unlimited benevolence.

PROP.

PROP. LXIX.

To deduce practical Rules for augmenting the benevolent Affections, and ſuppreſſing the malevolent ones.

For this purpoſe we ought, Firſt, Diligently to practiſe all ſuch acts of friendſhip, generoſity, and compaſſion, as our abilities of any kind extend to; and rigorouſly to refrain from all ſallies of anger, reſentment, envy, jealouſy, &c. For though our affections are not directly and immediately ſubject to the voluntary power, yet our actions are; and conſequently our affections alſo mediately. He that at firſt practiſes acts of benevolence by conſtraint, and continues to practiſe them, will at laſt have aſſociated ſuch a variety of pleaſures with them, as to transfer a great inſtantaneous pleaſure upon them, and beget in himſelf the affections from which they naturally flow. In like manner, if we abſtain from malevolent actions, we ſhall dry up the ill paſſions, which are their ſources.

Secondly, It will be of great uſe frequently to reflect upon the great pleaſures and rewards attending on benevolence, alſo upon the many evils preſent and future, to which the contrary temper expoſes us. For thus we ſhall likewiſe transfer pleaſure and pain by aſſociation upon theſe tempers reſpectively; and rational ſelf-intereſt will be made to beget pure benevolence, and to extinguiſh all kinds and degrees of malevolence.

Thirdly, It is neceſſary to pray frequently and fervently (*i. e.* as far as we can excite fervour by our voluntary powers) for others, friends, benefactors, ſtrangers, enemies. All exertions of our affections cheriſh them; and thoſe made under the more immediate ſenſe of the divine attributes have an extraor-

dinary efficacy this way, by mixing the love, awe, and other exalted emotions of mind attending our addreſſes to God, with our affections towards men, ſo as to improve and purify them thereby. Petitions for the increaſe of our benevolence, and ſuppreſſion of our malevolence, have the ſame tendency.

Fourthly, All meditations upon the attributes of God, and particularly upon his infinite benevolence to all his creatures, have a ſtrong tendency to refine and augment our benevolent affections.

Fifthly, The frequent conſideration of our own miſery, helpleſſneſs, ſinfulneſs, entire dependence upon God, &c. raiſes in us compaſſion for others, as well as concern, and earneſt deſires and prayers, for ourſelves. And compaſſion is, in this imperfect probationary ſtate, a moſt principal part of our benevolent affections.

PROP. LXX.

To deduce practical Rules for the Conduct of Men towards each other in Society.

SINCE benevolence is now proved to be a primary purſuit, it follows, that we are to direct every action ſo as to produce the greateſt happineſs, and the leaſt miſery, in our power. This is that rule of ſocial behaviour, which univerſal unlimited benevolence inculcates.

But the application of this rule in real life is attended with conſiderable difficulties and perplexities. It is impoſſible for the moſt ſagacious and experienced perſons to make any accurate eſtimate of the future conſequences of particular actions, ſo as, in all the variety of circumſtances which occur, to determine juſtly, which action would contribute moſt to augment happineſs and leſſen miſery. We muſt therefore, inſtead of this moſt general rule, ſubſtitute others leſs general, and ſubordinate to it, and which admit

admit of a more commodious practical application. Of this kind are the ten rules that follow. Where they coincide, we may ſuppoſe them to add ſtrength to each other; where they are oppoſite, or ſeemingly ſo, to moderate and reſtrain one another; ſo as that the ſum total ſhall always be the beſt direction in our power for promoting the happineſs, and leſſening the miſery, of others.

The firſt rule is obedience to the ſcripture precepts in the natural, obvious, and popular meaning of them. That this muſt, in general, contribute to public good, needs no proof: piety and benevolence evidently coincide here, as in other caſes. The ſcripture precepts are indeed themſelves, *the rule of life.* But then there is the ſame ſort of difficulty in applying them accurately to particular caſes, as in applying the above-mentioned moſt general rule, by means of an eſtimate of the conſequences of actions. It is impoſſible, in many particular caſes, from the nature of language, to determine whether the action under conſideration come preciſely under this or that ſcripture precept, interpreted literally, as may appear from the endleſs ſubtleties and intricacies of caſuiſtical divinity. However, it cannot but be that the common and popular application muſt, for the moſt part, direct us to their true intention and meaning. Let every man therefore, in the particular circumſtances of real life, recollect the ſcripture precepts, and follow them in their firſt and moſt obvious ſenſe, unleſs where this is ſtrongly oppoſite to ſome of the following rules; which yet will ſeldom happen.

Secondly, Great regard muſt be had both to our own moral ſenſe, and to that of others. This rule coincides remarkably with the foregoing. They are together the chief ſupports of all that is good, even in the moſt refined and philoſophical, as well as in the vulgar; and therefore muſt not be weakened, or explained away.

Thirdly, It is very proper in all deliberate actions to weigh, as well as we can, the probable conſequences on each ſide, and to ſuffer the balance to have ſome influence in all caſes, and the chief where the other rules do not interfere much, or explicitly. But to be determined by our own judgments as to conſequences, in oppoſition to the two foregoing rules, or to thoſe that follow, ſavours much of pride, and is often only a cloak for ſelf-intereſt and maliciouſneſs.

Fourthly, The natural motions of good-will, compaſſion, &c. muſt have great regard paid to them, leſt we contract a philoſophical hardneſs of heart, by endeavouring or pretending to act upon higher and more extenſively beneficial views, than vulgar minds, the ſofter ſex, &c. Some perſons carry this much too far on the other ſide, and encourage many public miſchiefs, through a falſe miſguided tenderneſs, to criminals, perſons in diſtreſs through preſent groſs vices, &c. For the mere inſtantaneous motions of good-will and compaſſion, which are generated in ſo many different ways in different perſons, cannot be in all more, than a good general direction for promoting the greateſt good.

Fifthly, The rule of placing ourſelves in the ſeveral ſituations of all the perſons concerned, and inquiring what we ſhould then expect, is of excellent uſe for directing, enforcing, and reſtraining our actions, and for begetting in us a ready, conſtant ſenſe of what is fit and equitable.

Sixthly, Perſons in the near relations of life, benefactors, dependents, and enemies, ſeem to have, in moſt caſes, a prior claim to ſtrangers. For the general benevolence ariſes from our cultivation of theſe particular ſources of it. The root muſt therefore be cheriſhed, that the branches may flouriſh, and the fruit arrive to its perfection.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, Benevolent and religious perſons have, all other circumſtances being equal, a prior claim to the reſt of mankind. Natural benevolence itſelf teaches this, as well as the moral ſenſe. But it is likewiſe of great importance to the public, thus to encourage virtue. Not to mention, that all opportunities and powers become more extenſively beneficial, by being entruſted with deſerving perſons.

Eighthly, Since the concerns of religion, and a future ſtate, are of infinitely more importance than thoſe which relate to this world, we ought to be principally ſolicitous about the eſtabliſhment and promotion of true and pure religion, and to make all our endeavours concerning temporal things ſubſervient to the precepts for teaching all nations, and for carrying the everlaſting goſpel to the ends of the earth.

Ninthly, We ought to pay the ſtricteſt regard to truth, both with reſpect to affirmations and promiſes. There are very few inſtances, where veracity of both kinds is not evidently conducive to public good, and falſehood in every degree pernicious. It follows therefore, that, in caſes where appearances are otherwiſe, the general regard to truth, which is of ſo much conſequence to the world, ought to make us adhere inviolably to it; and that it is a moſt dangerous practice to falſify, as is often done, from falſe delicacy, pretended or even real officiouſneſs, falſe ſhame, and other ſuch diſingenuous motives, or even from thoſe that border upon virtue. The harm which theſe things do, by creating a mutual diffidence, and diſpoſition to deceive, in mankind, is exceedingly great; and cannot be counterbalanced by the preſent good effects aſſigned as the reaſons for this practice. Yet ſtill the degrees are here, as in other caſes, ſo inſenſible, and the boundaries ſo nice, that it is difficult, or even impoſſible, to give any exact rule. A direct falſehood ſeems ſcarce to

admit a toleration, whatever be thrown into the oppoſite ſcale; unleſs in caſes of madneſs, murder to be prevented, &c. Equivocations, concealments, pretences, are in general unjuſtifiable; but may perhaps be ſometimes allowed. The wiſdom of the ſerpent joined to the innocence of the dove, or chriſtian prudence to chriſtian ſimplicity and charity, will generally enable men to avoid all difficulties. There is ſcarce any thing which does greater violence to the moral ſenſe in well educated perſons, than diſingenuouſneſs of any kind, which is a ſtrong argument againſt it. Lies and liars are particularly noted in the prophetical writings, and the great ſin of idolatry is repreſented under this image. As to falſe oaths, affirmative or promiſſory, there ſeems to be no poſſible reaſon ſufficient to juſtify the violation of them. The third commandment, and the reverence due to the divine majeſty, lay an abſolute reſtraint here.

Tenthly, Obedience to the civil magiſtrate is a ſubordinate general rule of the utmoſt importance. It is evidently for the public good, that every member of a ſtate ſhould ſubmit to the governing power, whatever that be. Peace, order, and harmony, reſult from this in the general; confuſion and miſchief of all kinds from the contrary. So that though it may and muſt be ſuppoſed, that diſobedience, in certain particular caſes, will, as far as the ſingle act, and its immediate conſequences, are conſidered, contribute more to public good, than obedience; yet, as it is a dangerous example to others, and will probably lead the perſon himſelf into other inſtances of diſobedience afterwards, &c. diſobedience in every caſe becomes deſtructive of public happineſs upon the whole. To this we may add, that as part of our notions of, and regards to, the Deity, are taken from the civil magiſtrate; ſo, converſely, the magiſtrate is to be conſidered as God's vicegerent

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on earth; and all oppoſition to him weakens the force of religious obligations, as well as of civil ones; and if there be an oath of fidelity and ſubmiſſion, or even a bare promiſe, this will give a farther ſanction. Laſtly, the precepts of the New Teſtament given under very wicked governors, and the whole tenor of it, which ſuppoſes chriſtians to have higher views, and not to intermeddle with the kingdoms of this world, enjoin an implicit ſubmiſſion.

We ought therefore, in conſequence of this tenth rule, to reverence all perſons in authority; not to paſs haſty cenſures upon their actions; to make candid allowances on account of the difficulties of government, the bad education of princes, and perſons of high birth, and the flatteries, and extraordinary temptations, with which they are ſurrounded; to obſerve the laws ourſelves and promote the obſervance of them, where the penalties may be evaded, or are found inſufficient; to look upon property as a thing abſolutely determined by the laws; ſo that though a man may and ought to recede from what the law would give him, out of compaſſion, generoſity, love of peace, view of the greater good to the whole, &c. yet he muſt never evade, ſtrain, or in any way do violence to the laws, in order to obtain what he may think his own according to equity; and wherever he has offended, or is judged by lawful authority to have offended, he muſt ſubmit to the puniſhment, whatever it be.

Here two things may be objected in reſpect of this tenth rule: Firſt, That the duty to magiſtrates ought to be deduced from the origin of civil government. Secondly, That it is lawful to reſiſt the ſupreme magiſtrate openly, in thoſe caſes, where the good conſequences of open reſiſtance appear in the ultimate reſult to overbalance the ill conſequences.

To

To the firſt I anſwer, that we here ſuppoſe benevolence to be the rule of duty, public good the end of benevolence, and ſubmiſſion to magiſtrates the means of promoting the public good. Unleſs therefore ſomething can be objected to one of theſe three poſitions, the concluſion, that ſubmiſſion to magiſtrates is a duty, muſt ſtand. It appears to me alſo, that this method of deducing obedience to magiſtrates is much more ſimple and direct, than that from the origin of civil government. For the real origin of civil government having been either the gradual tranſition and degeneration of parental patriarchal authority (which being originally directed by pure love, and ſupported by abſolute authority, can never be paralleled now) into ſmall monarchies in the ancient world, of which we know nothing accurately; or the uſurped power of conquerors and tyrants; or the delegated power of thoſe, who in difficult and factious times have gained over the minds of the populace to themſelves, and balanced the intereſts and ambition of particulars againſt one another; it ſeems that little of uſe to public happineſs can be drawn from theſe patterns, where the perſons concerned were either very little ſolicitous about public happineſs, or very little qualified to make a proper eſtimate of the beſt methods of attaining it, or, laſtly, were obliged to comply with the prejudices, and eſtabliſhed cuſtoms, of an ignorant head-ſtrong multitude. The only pattern of great uſe and authority appears to be the *Jewiſh* Theocracy. As to the fictitious ſuppoſition, that a ſet of philoſophers, with all their natural rights about them, agree to give up certain of theſe, in order to preſerve the reſt, and promote the good of the whole, this is too large a field. Beſides, public good muſt either be made the criterion of natural rights, and of the obligation to give them up, &c. which would bring this hypotheſis to coincide with

with the direct obvious conſiderations above-mentioned; or, if any other criterion be aſſumed, the determinations will be falſe. This method of reaſoning has been adopted too ſervilely, by the force which aſſociation has over the human mind, from the technical methods of extending human laws to caſes not provided for explicitly, and particularly from the reaſonings made uſe of in the civil law. However, the writers of this claſs have delivered many excellent particular precepts, in relation to the duties both of public and of private life; and therefore have deſerved well of the world, notwithſtanding that their foundation for the laws of nature and nations be liable to the foregoing objections.

Secondly, It is ſaid, that there are certain caſes, in which open reſiſtance is lawful. And it muſt be owned, that where there is no oath of allegiance, or where that oath is plainly conditional, caſes may be put, where reſiſtance with all its conſequences ſeems more likely to produce public good, than non-reſiſtance. If therefore a man can lay his hand upon his heart, and fairly declare, that he is not influenced by ambition, ſelf-intereſt, envy, reſentment, &c. but merely by tenderneſs and good-will to the public, I cannot preſume to ſay, that he is to be reſtrained, or that chriſtianity, that *perfect law of liberty*, whoſe end is *peace* and *good-will to men*, ſhould be made an obſtruction to any truly benevolent endeavours, where chriſtian *liberty* is not made uſe of as *a cloak for maliciouſneſs*. But theſe caſes are ſo rare, that it is needleſs to give any rules about them. In public diſturbances, when men's paſſions are up, there are ſo many violences on all hands, that it is impoſſible to ſay, which ſide one would with to have uppermoſt; only there is always a prejudice in favour of the laſt eſtabliſhment, becauſe the minds of the multitude may be quieted ſooner by getting into the former road.

road. Rules of this kind can only be ſuppoſed to relate to thoſe that are diſpoſed to obey them, which are very few in compariſon. If one could ſuppoſe, that all would obey implicitly, no diſturbance could ariſe; if all diſobey, it is infinite anarchy. Therefore, of all the intermediate ſuppoſitions, thoſe ſeem to be the beſt, in which moſt obey. In ſhort, it appears to be the duty of a good chriſtian to ſit ſtill, and ſuffer the children of this world to diſpute and fight about it; only ſubmitting himſelf to the powers in being, whatever they are (they cannot be entitled to leſs regard than the heathen emperors, to whom the apoſtles enjoined obedience) for the ſake of peace and quietneſs to himſelf and others; and, as much as in him lies, moderating the heats and animoſities of parties againſt each other. However, I do not mean, that thoſe who, according to the conſtitution of a government, have an executive or legiſlative power lodged with them, ſhould not exert it with authority. As to the caſe of oaths, no view of public good can be ſufficient to ſuperſede ſo ſacred an obligation. And thus it is not only allowed to, but even required of, a good chriſtian, to be active in the defence of an eſtabliſhment, to which he has given an oath to that purpoſe.

Other rules, beſides the ten foregoing, might be aſſigned, or theſe expreſſed in a different way. I have put down thoſe which appear to me to be, in fact, the chief principles of ſocial conduct to wiſe and good men. They muſt all be ſuppoſed to influence and interpret each other. Let a man only diveſt himſelf of all ſelf-regards, as much as poſſible, and love his neighbour as himſelf, and God above all, and he will generally find ſome point, and that without much difficulty or perplexity, in which all theſe rules unite to produce the greateſt good, upon the whole, to all the perſons concerned.

I proceed

I proceed next to conſider briefly the ſeveral principal relations of life, and the duties ariſing from them, according to the foregoing or ſuch like rules.

The firſt of theſe is that of huſband and wife. The loving our neighbour as ourſelves begins here. This is the firſt inſtance of it; and, where this love is mutual and perfect, there an entire equality of the two ſexes takes place. The authority of the man is only a mark of our preſent degenerate ſtate, by reaſon of which dominion muſt be placed ſomewhere, and therefore in the man, as being of greater bodily ſtrength and firmneſs of mind. But this is that kind of right or property, which men are obliged to give up, though women are alſo obliged to acknowledge it. Suppoſe the ſexes to ſhare all their joys and griefs perfectly, to have an entire concern for each other, and eſpecially for each other's eternal welfare, and they are, as it were, reinſtated in paradiſe; and the dominion of the man over the woman, with her ſubjection, and conſequent reluctance, can only take place again upon their mutual tranſgreſſion. And though in this imperfect ſtate it ſeems impoſſible, from the theory above given, for any one to love another, in every branch of deſire and happineſs, entirely as himſelf; yet there appear to be ſuch near approaches to it in benevolent, devout, married perſons, united upon right motives, as to annihilate all conſiderable, or even perceptible diſtinction. It is of the utmoſt importance, that this grand foundation of all benevolence be duly laid, on account both of public and private happineſs. The chief or only means of doing this is religion. Where both parties have it in a high degree, they cannot fail of mutual happineſs; ſcarce, if one have it: where both are greatly defective in this principal article, it is almoſt impoſſible but diſſenſions, uneaſineſs, and mutual offences, ſhould ariſe.

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The ſecond great relation of life is that of parents to children; the principal duty of which is the giving a right education, or the imprinting ſuch aſſociations upon the minds of children, as may conduct them ſafe through the labyrinths of this world to a happy futurity. Religion therefore here again appears to be the one only neceſſary thing. It is the deſign of the preſent chapter to ſhew, that it contributes as certainly to give us the *maximum* of happineſs in this world, at leaſt the faireſt proſpect of it, as to ſecure it in the next. So that a parent muſt be led to the inculcating virtue in every view. The chief errors in education are owing to the want of this perſuaſion in a practical way; or to a falſe tenderneſs and opinion of the parent, whereby he is led to believe, or flatter himſelf, that his child's nature is not ſo degenerate and corrupt, as to require frequent corrections and reſtraints, with perpetual encouragements and incentives to virtue by reward, example, advice, books, converſation, &c. Otherwiſe it would appear from the hiſtory of the mind, its affections and paſſions, before given, that few children would miſcarry. Where due care is taken from the firſt, little ſeverity would ordinarily be neceſſary; but, in proportion as this care is neglected in the firſt years, a much greater degree of care, with high degrees of ſeverity both bodily and mental, become abſolutely requiſite to preſerve from miſery here and hereafter. We ſee that men of the ordinary ſtandard in virtue are ſeldom brought to a ſtate of repentance and ſalvation, without great ſufferings, both bodily and mental, from diſeaſes, ſad external accidents, deaths of friends, loſs of fortunes, &c. How then can it be ſuppoſed, that children can be brought into the right way, without analogous methods, both bodily and mental, though gentler indeed, in proportion as the child's age is more tender? And this ought to

make

make all affectionate parents labour from the earlieſt dawnings of underſtanding and deſire, to check the growing obſtinacy of the will; curb all ſallies of paſſion; impreſs the deepeſt, moſt amiable, reverential, and awful apprehenſions of God, a future ſtate, and all ſacred things; reſtrain anger, jealouſy, ſelfiſhneſs; encourage love, compaſſion, generoſity, forgiveneſs, gratitude; excite, and even compel to, ſuch induſtry as the tender age will properly admit. For one principal end and difficulty of life is to generate ſuch moderate, varying, and perpetually actuating motives, by means of the natural ſenſible deſires being aſſociated with, and parcelled out upon foreign objects, as may keep up a ſtate of moderate cheerfulneſs, and uſeful employment, during the whole courſe of our lives: whereas ſenſual, blind, an uninformed deſire preſſes violently for immediate gratification, is injurious to others, and deſtroys its own aims, or, at the beſt, gives way only to ſpleen and diſſatisfaction.

As to the other duties towards children, ſuch as care of their preſent and future health of body, proviſion of external neceſſaries and conveniencies for them, &c. they are ſufficiently obvious, and can ſcarce be neglected by thoſe, who are truly ſolicitous about the principal point, a religious education.

The duties of children to parents are ſubmiſſion, obedience, gratitude even to the worſt. For it can ſcarce be ſuppoſed, that children have not great obligations to their parents, upon the whole. And as the love of parents to children may ſerve to give parents a feeling conviction of the infinite benevolence of God our heavenly Father, ſo the ſubmiſſion of children to parents is the pattern of, and introduction to, true religion; and therefore is of infinite importance to be duly paid. Which may ſerve as an admonition both to parents, to ſhew themſelves fit vicegerents

vicegerents of God, and to children to give them the reſpect due to them as ſuch.

As the reciprocal duties between parents and children are patterns of the reciprocal duties between ſuperiors and inferiors of all kinds; ſo the duties and affections between brethren and ſiſters are our guides and monitors in reſpect of equals; both which things are intimated in theſe and ſuch like ſcripture phraſes; *intreat an elder as a father, the younger men as brethren; love as brethren*, &c. The ſeveral events of childhood, the conjunction of intereſts, the examples of others, &c. impreſs upon us a greater concern, love, compaſſion, &c. for all perſons nearly related to us in blood, than for others in like circumſtances. And though the ultimate ratio of duty is to love every man equally, becauſe we are to love every man as ourſelves; yet ſince our condition here keeps us in ſome degree the neceſſary ſlaves of ſelf-love, it follows that neither ought we to love all perſons equally, but our relations, friends, and enemies, preferably to utter ſtrangers; leſt, in endeavouring to love all equally, we come not to love others more, but our brethren leſs, than we did before.

The cleaving of our affections to all with whom we have frequent pleaſing intercourſes, with mutual obligations, is the foundation of friendſhip; which yet cannot ſubſiſt long, but amongſt the truly religious. And great care ought to be taken here, not to have men's perſons in admiration, not to eſteem our friend a nonpareil. There is great pride and vanity in this, juſt as in the like opinions concerning ourſelves, our children, poſſeſſions, &c. Such intimacies, by exalting one above meaſure in our love and eſteem, muſt depreſs others; and they generally end in jealouſies and quarrels, even between the two intimates. All men are frail and imperfect, and it is a great injury to any man, to think more highly of him than he deſerves, and to treat him ſo. Our

regards

regards cannot continue long ſtrained up to an unnatural pitch. And if we conſider, that we all have a proper buſineſs in life, which engages us in a variety of chriſtian actions, and conſequently of friendſhips and intimacies, this peculiar attachment of one perſon to another of the ſame ſex will appear inconſiſtent with the duties of life. Where the ſexes are different, ſuch an attachment is either with a view to marriage, or elſe it becomes liable to ſtill greater objections.

As to enemies, the forgiving them, praying for them, doing them good offices, compaſſion to them as expoſing themſelves to ſufferings by a wrong behaviour, the ſenſe of our having injured them, which is generally the caſe more or leſs, &c. have in generous and religious men a peculiar tendency to excite love and compaſſion for them.

The laſt relation which I ſhall conſider is that of magiſtrates, *i. e.* the perſons who in each ſociety have the legiſlative or executive powers, or both, committed to them. The duty ariſing from this relation may be diſtinguiſhed into two branches. Firſt, That towards the perſons over whom the magiſtrate preſides; ſecondly, that towards other ſtates.

In reſpect of the firſt, we may at once affirm, that the principal care of a magiſtrate, of the father of a people, is to encourage and enforce benevolence and piety, the belief and practice of natural and revealed religion; and to diſcourage and reſtrain infidelity, profaneneſs, and immorality, as much as poſſible. And this,

Firſt, Becauſe the concerns of another world are of infinitely greater importance than any relating to this; ſo that he who wiſhes well to a people, and preſides over them for their good, cannot but be chiefly ſolicitous and induſtrious in this particular.

Secondly, Becauſe even the preſent well-being of ſtates depends entirely upon the private virtues of the

ſeveral ranks and orders of men. For the public happineſs is compounded of the happineſs of the ſeveral individuals compoſing the body politic; and the virtues of induſtry, temperance, chaſtity, meekneſs, juſtice, generoſity, devotion, reſignation, &c. have a tendency to promote the happineſs both of the perſons that poſſeſs them, and of others.

It will therefore be the duty of the magiſtrate, in making and executing laws, to inquire which method appears to be moſt conducive to virtue in the people, to purſue this ſimply and ſteadily, and not to doubt but that all the ſubordinate ends of government, as thoſe of increaſing the riches and power of the ſtate, promoting arts and ſciences, &c. will be obtained in ſuch degrees as they ought, as are productive of real happineſs to the people, by the ſame means. But where it is doubtful what method is moſt conducive to virtue, there the ſubordinate ends are to be taken into conſideration, each according to its value: juſt as in the caſe of ſelf-intereſt in individuals; where benevolence, piety, and the moral ſenſe, are entirely ſilent, there cool, rational ſelf intereſt may, and, as it appears, ought to be admitted as a principle of action.

As to foreign ſtates, they, and conſequently the magiſtrates who preſide over them, are under the ſame obligations, as private perſons are in reſpect of each other. Thus, ſince a private perſon, in order to obtain his own greateſt happineſs, even in this world, muſt obey the precepts of benevolence, piety, and the moral ſenſe, with an abſolute and implicit confidence in them; ſo ſtates, *i. e.* their governors or repreſentatives, ought to deal with each other according to juſtice, generoſity, charity, &c. even from the mere principle of intereſt. For the reaſon is the ſame in both caſes. If individuals be all members of the ſame myſtical body, much more

are ſtates, *i. e.* large collections of individuals. They ought therefore to have the ſame care for each other, as for themſelves; and whoever is an aggreſſor, or injurious, muſt expect to ſuffer, as in private life. *They that take the ſword ſhall periſh by the ſword. He that leadeth into captivity muſt go into captivity. Babylon muſt receive double for all her inſults upon other nations*, &c. All which is verified by obſervation, both in regard to private perſons, and to ſtates, as far as it is reaſonable for us to expect to ſee it verified, in this our ignorance of the real quantities of virtue and vice, and of happineſs and miſery. But in all obſervations of this kind we ought conſtantly to bear in mind, that God's *judgments are unſearchable, and his ways paſt finding out*, in particular caſes, though ſufficiently manifeſt in the general courſe and tenor of things. By the laſt he ſhews us his moral attributes, his providence, and his relation to us as our governor; by the firſt he humbles the pride, raſhneſs, and ſelf-conceit, of human underſtanding.

It may not perhaps be improper here to ſay ſomething concerning the lawfulneſs of war. Now this regards either the magiſtrate, or the ſubject. Firſt, then, it is very evident, that as private perſons are, in general, prohibited by the law of Chriſt to revenge themſelves, reſiſt evil, &c. ſo are ſtates, and conſequently, magiſtrates. But then as private perſons have, under chriſtianity, that *perfect law of liberty*, a power to puniſh injuries done to themſelves, oppoſe violence offered to themſelves, &c. when their view in this is a ſincere regard to others, as affected by theſe injuries and violences, ſo magiſtrates have a power, and by conſequence lie under an obligation, of the like kind, where the real motive is tenderneſs to their own people in a juſt cauſe, or a regard to the general welfare of their own ſtate, and the neighbouring ones. Se-

condly, Though it ſeems entirely unjuſtifiable for private perſons to enter upon the profeſſion of war wantonly, and with a view to riches, honours, &c. eſpecially ſince ſo much violence and cruelty, and ſo many temptations, attend this profeſſion; yet where a perſon is already engaged, and has very urgent reaſons reſtraining him from withdrawing, or receives a particular command from a lawful magiſtrate, it ſeems to be allowable, or even his duty.

SECT.

SECT. VII.

OF THE REGARD DUE TO THE PLEASURES AND PAINS OF THEOPATHY IN FORMING THE RULE OF LIFE.

PROP. LXXI.

The Love of God regulates, improves, and perfects all the other Parts of our Nature; and affords a Pleasure superior in Kind and Degree to all the rest: it is therefore our primary Pursuit, and ultimate End.

In what manner the precepts of piety regulate, improve, and perfect the four inferior classes of pleasure, viz. those of sensation, imagination, ambition, and self-interest, has been shewn already in this chapter. But the precepts of piety are those which teach us, what homage of our affections, and external actions, ought to be addressed to the Deity in a direct and immediate manner; and it will appear under the two next propositions, in which the affections and actions enjoined by piety are particularly considered, that all these terminate ultimately in the love of God, and are absorbed by it: the love of God does therefore regulate, improve, and perfect all the four inferior classes of pleasure.

The same thing is evident with respect to the whole of our natures, in a shorter manner, and according to the usual sense, in which the phrase of the *love of God* is taken. For the perpetual exertion of a pleasing affection towards a being infinite in power, knowledge, and goodness, and who is also our friend and father, cannot but enhance all our joys, and alleviate all our sorrows; the sense of his

preſence and protection will reſtrain all actions, that are exceſſive, irregular, or hurtful; ſupport and encourage us in all ſuch as are of a contrary nature; and infuſe ſuch peace and tranquillity of mind, as will enable us to ſee clearly, and act uniformly. The perfection therefore of every part of our natures muſt depend upon the love of God, and the conſtant comfortable ſenſe of his preſence.

With reſpect to benevolence, or the love of our neighbour, it may be obſerved, that this can never be free from partiality and ſelfiſhneſs, till we take our ſtation in the divine nature, and view every thing from thence, and in the relation which it bears to God. If the relation to ourſelves be made the point of view, our proſpect muſt be narrow, and the appearance of what we do ſee diſtorted. When we conſider the ſcenes of folly, vanity, and miſery, which muſt preſent themſelves to our ſight in this point; when we are diſappointed in the happineſs of our friends, or feel the reſentment of our enemies; our benevolence will begin to languiſh, and our hearts to fail us; we ſhall complain of the corruption and wickedneſs of that world, which we have hitherto loved with a benevolence merely human; and ſhew by our complaints, that we are ſtill deeply tinctured with the ſame corruption and wickedneſs. This is generally the caſe with young and unexperienced perſons, in the beginning of a virtuous courſe, and before they have made a due advancement in the ways of piety. Human benevolence, though *ſweet in the mouth*, is *bitter in the belly*; and the diſappointments which it meets with, are ſometimes apt to incline us to call the divine goodneſs in queſtion. But he who is poſſeſſed of a full aſſurance of this, who loves God with his whole powers, as an inexhauſtible fountain of love and beneficence to all his creatures, at all times, and in all places, as much when he chaſtiſes, as when he rewards, will learn

learn thereby to love enemies, as well as friends; the ſinful and miſerable, as well as the holy and happy; to rejoice, and give thanks, for every thing which he ſees and feels, however irreconcileable, to his preſent ſuggeſtions; and to labour, as an inſtrument under God, for the promotion of virtue and happineſs, with real courage and conſtancy, *knowing that his labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.*

In like manner, the moral ſenſe requires a perpetual direction and ſupport from the love of God, in order to keep it ſteady and pure. When men ceaſe to regard God in a due meaſure, and to make him their ultimate end, having ſome other end, beyond which they do not look, they are very apt to relapſe into negligence and callofity, and to act without any virtuous principle; and, on the other hand, if they often look up to him, but not with a filial love and confidence, thoſe *weighty matters of the law*, they *tithe mint, anife, and cumin*, and fill themſelves with endleſs ſcruples and anxieties about the lawfulneſs and unlawfulneſs of trivial actions: whereas he who loves God with all his heart, cannot but have a conſtant care not to offend him, at the ſame time that his amiable notions of God, and the conſciouſneſs of his love and ſincerity towards him, are ſuch a fund of hope and joy, as precludes all ſcruples that are unworthy of the divine goodneſs, or unſuitable to our preſent ſtate of frailty and ignorance.

We are next to ſhew, that the love of God affords a pleaſure which is ſuperior in kind and degree to all the reſt, of which our natures are capable. Now this will appear,

Firſt, Becauſe *God is light, and in him there is no darkneſs at all*; becauſe he is *love* itſelf, ſuch love as quite *caſts out all fear*. The love and contemplation of his perfection and happineſs will transform us into his likeneſs, into that image of him in which

we were firſt made; will make us *partakers of the divine nature*, and conſequently of the perfection and happineſs of it. Our wills may thus be united to his will, and therefore rendered free from diſappointments; we ſhall, by degrees, ſee every thing as God ſees it, *i. e.* ſee every thing that he has made to be good, to be an object of pleaſure. It is true, that all this, in its perfect ſenſe, in its ultimate ratio, can only be ſaid by way of anticipation: whilſt we carry theſe fleſhly tabernacles about with us, we muſt have croſſes to bear, frailties, and thorns in the fleſh, to ſtruggle with. But ſtill our ſtrength will at laſt be made perfect through weakneſs; and ſome devout perſons appear to have been ſo far transformed, in this life, as to acquieſce, and even rejoice, in the events of it, however afflicting apparently, to be freed from fear and ſolicitude, and to receive their daily bread with conſtant thankfulneſs, *with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory*. And though the number of theſe happy perſons has probably been very ſmall comparatively, though the path be not frequented and beaten; yet we may aſſure ourſelves, that it is in the power of all to arrive at the ſame ſtate, if their love and devotion be ſufficiently earneſt. All other loves, with all their defilements and idolatries, will die away in due order and proportion, in the heart, which yields itſelf to God: for they are all impure and idolatrous, except when conſidered as the methods appointed by God to beget in us the love of himſelf: they all leave ſtains; have a mixture of evil, as well as of good; they muſt all be tried and purified by the fire of his love, and paſs thereby from human to divine.

Secondly, God is our centre, and the love of him a pleaſure ſuperior to all the reſt, not only on account of the mixture of pain in all the reſt, as ſhewn in the laſt paragraph, but alſo becauſe they all point to it, like ſo many lines terminating in the ſame centre. When

When men have entered ſufficiently into the ways of piety, God appears more and more to them in the whole courſe and tenor of their lives; and by uniting himſelf with all their ſenſations, and intellectual perceptions, overpowers all the pains; augments, and attracts to himſelf, all the pleaſures. Every thing ſweet, beautiful, or glorious, brings in the idea of God, mixes with it, and vaniſhes into it. For all is God's; he is the only cauſe and reality; and the exiſtence of every thing elſe is only the effect, pledge, and proof, of his exiſtence and glory. Let the mind be once duly ſeaſoned with this truth, and its practical applications, and every the moſt indifferent thing will become food for religious meditation, a book of devotion, and a pſalm of praiſe. And when the purity and perfection of the pleaſures of theopathy, ſet forth in the laſt article, are added to their unlimited extent, as it appears in this, it is eaſy to ſee, that they muſt be far ſuperior to all the reſt both in kind and degree. We may ſee alſo, that the frame of our nature, and particularly its ſubjection to the power of aſſociation, has an obvious and neceſſary tendency to make the love of God, in fact, ſuperior to our other affections. If we ſuppoſe creatures ſubject to the law of aſſociation to be placed in the midſt of a variety of pleaſures and pains, the ſum total of the firſt being greater than that of the laſt, and to connect God with each as its ſole cauſe, pain will be overpowered by pleaſure, and the indefinite number of compound pleaſures reſulting from aſſociation be at laſt united entirely with the idea of God. And this our ultimate happineſs will be accelerated or retarded, according as we apply ourſelves more or leſs to the cultivation of the devout affections, to reading, and meditation upon divine ſubjects, to prayer and praiſe. Thus we ſhall the ſooner learn to join with the angels, and *ſpirits of juſt men made perfect*, in aſcribing *power, and riches, and wiſdom*,

wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing, and every aſſociated luſtre, to their true fountain, *to God and the Lamb.*

Thirdly, As all the other pleaſures have a mixture of pain and impurity in them, and are all evidently means, not ends, ſo are the objects of them frequently taken from us; whereas no time, place, or circumſtance of life, can deprive us of, no height, depth, or creature of any kind, can ſeparate us from, the love of God. Our hearts may be turned to him in the greateſt external confuſion, as well as in the deepeſt ſilence and retirement. All the duties of life, when directed to God, become pleaſures; and by the ſame means, every the ſmalleſt action becomes the diſcharge of the proper duty of the time and place. Thus we may redeem our time, and turn it to the beſt advantage; thus we may convert every ſituation and event of life into preſent comfort, and future felicity.

Fourthly, When the love of God is made thus to ariſe from every object, and to exert itſelf in every action, it becomes of a permanent nature, ſuitable to our preſent frame; and will not paſs into deadneſs and diſguſt, as our other pleaſures do from repeated gratification.

It is true indeed, that novices in the ways of piety and devotion are frequently, and more experienced perſons ſometimes, affected with ſpiritual aridity and dejection; but then this ſeems to be either from pride, or ſpiritual ſelfiſhneſs, *i. e.* from the impurity of their love to God. They give themſelves up perhaps to raptures, and extatic tranſports, from the preſent pleaſures which they afford, to the neglect of the great duties of life, of charity, friendſhip, induſtry; or they think themſelves the peculiar favourites of heaven on account of theſe raptures; and deſpiſe and cenſure others, as of inferior claſſes, in the ſchool of piety. Now theſe violent agitations of the

the brain cannot recur often without paſſing out of the limits of pleaſure into thoſe of pain; and particularly into the mental pains of moroſeneſs, jealouſy, fear, dejection, and melancholy. Both the greatneſs and the ſameneſs of the pleaſures concur, as in other caſes, to convert them into pains. But it does not appear, that thoſe who ſeek God in all his works, and receive all the pleaſures and pains which the order of his providence offers, with thankfulneſs, and fidelity in their duty, as coming from his hand, would either want that variety, or that temperature, which in our preſent ſtate is neceſſary to make the love of God a perpetual fund of joy. And it ſeems peculiarly proper to remark here, that if the primitive chriſtians, inſtead of retiring into deſarts, caves, and cells, for the cultivation of ſpeculative devotion, had continued to ſhew forth and practiſe the love of God by expoſing themſelves to all ſuch difficulties and dangers, as had ariſen in the inceſſant propagation of the everlaſting goſpel, to *every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people*, they would perhaps have rejoiced evermore, even in the greateſt tribulations, as the apoſtles, and their immediate followers, who *kept* their *firſt love*, ſeem to have done; alſo that the preſent and future generations of chriſtians can never be delivered from ſuperſtitious fears and anxieties, from dryneſs, ſcrupuloſity, and dejection, till they *go into all the world, and preach the goſpel to every creature*, according to our Saviour's laſt command. However, till this happy time comes, the alloy of the pleaſures of theopathy with pain ſerves to remind us of our fallen ſtate, and of the greatneſs of our fall, ſince our primary and pureſt pleaſures are ſubject to ſuch an alloy; and thus, learning compaſſion, humility, and ſubmiſſion to God, we ſhall be exalted thereby, and, after we have *ſuffered a while, be perfected, ſtabliſhed, ſtrengthened, ſettled.*

PROP.

PROP. LXXII.

To deduce practical Rules concerning the Theopathetic Affections, Faith, Fear, Gratitude, Hope, Truſt, Reſignation, and Love.

OF FAITH IN GOD.

THE firſt of the theopathetic affections is faith. *He that cometh to God muſt believe that he is; and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* But this faith is of very different degrees, even in thoſe who equally acknowledge their belief of the exiſtence of God, and agree in their expreſſions concerning his nature and attributes, according as their ideas of this kind are more or leſs vivid and perfect, and recur more or leſs frequently in the events of life. It is probable indeed, that no man, eſpecially in a chriſtian country, can be utterly devoid of faith. The impreſſion made upon us in infancy, our converſation afterwards, the books that we read, and the wonders of the viſible world, all concur to generate ideas of the power and knowledge of God at leaſt, and to excite ſuch degrees of fear, as give a reality to the ideas, and extort ſo much of aſſent, that the moſt profeſſed atheiſts, did they reflect upon what paſſes in their thoughts, and declare it ſincerely, could not but acknowledge, that at certain times they are like *the devils*, who *believe and tremble*. After theſe come the perſons who dare not but own God in words, who have few or no objections to his nature and attributes, or who can even produce many arguments and demonſtrations in favour of them; and yet put away the thoughts of God as much as they are able. The next degree is of ſuch as try to *ſerve God and mammon* together in various proportions; till at laſt we come to thoſe, whoſe *heart is perfect before God*, who love him with all their powers,

powers, and *walk in his preſence* continually. Now this laſt ſtate of faith is that which the ſcripture puts as equivalent to our whole duty: for in this laſt ſtate it comprehends, and coincides with, all the other theopathetic affections, when they are likewiſe carried to their ultimate perfection. In their firſt riſe they all differ from one another; in their laſt ſtate they all unite together, and may be expreſſed by the name of any ſingle one, when ſuppoſed perfect; though the moſt uſual, proper, and emphatic appellation ſeems to be the phraſe of *the love of God*, as before noted. Let us now inquire by what methods men may be moſt accelerated in their progreſs from the firſt dawnings of faith in infancy to its ultimate perfection.

Firſt, then, An early acquaintance with the ſcriptures, and the conſtant ſtudy of them, is the principal means whereby this faith is firſt to be generated, and afterwards improved and perfected. God taught mankind before the flood, and for ſome ages afterwards, his exiſtence, nature, and attributes, by expreſs revelation; and therefore it cannot but be the proper method for begetting faith in children, who are more ignorant, and unqualified for rational deductions, than adults in the rudeſt ages of the world, to initiate them early in the records of religion. And though afterwards *the inviſible things of God* may be known by the viſible creation, yet the miracles delivered in the ſcriptures have a peculiar tendency to awaken the attention, and to add that force, luſtre, and veneration, to our ideas of God, and his attributes, which are the cauſes and concomitants of aſſent or faith, according to the theory of theſe papers. The ſame thing holds of the prophecies, precepts, promiſes, and threatenings, of the ſcriptures, in their reſpective degrees; and it ſeems, in a manner, impoſſible for any one to be perpetually converſant in them, without this happy influence. All thoſe perſons therefore, who are ſo far

far advanced in faith, as to cry out with the father of the lunatic in the goſpel, *Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief*; ought, in conſequence of this prayer, to apply themſelves to the daily ſtudy of, and meditation upon, the ſcriptures. To which it is to be added, that as faith in Chriſt is alſo neceſſary, as well as faith in the one God and Father of all, and can be learnt no other way than from the ſcriptures, we ought upon this account alſo to eſteem them as the principal means, which God has put in our power, for the generation and improvement of our faith: *faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Secondly, To the ſtudy of the word of God muſt be joined that of his works. They are in all things analogous to each other, and are perpetual comments upon each other. I do not mean, that a man muſt be a deep philoſopher, in order to have faith in God; for, on the contrary, philoſophical reſearches, when purſued from curioſity or ambition, are *vain deceit*, and lead people to *make ſhipwreck of faith.* I would only recommend to every perſon, according to his knowledge and abilities, to conſider the works of God as his works; to refer all the power, wiſdom, and goodneſs in them, to him, as the ſole fountain of theſe; and to dwell upon the vaſtneſs, the luſtre, the beauty, the beneficence, which are obvious to vulgar as well as philoſophic eyes, till ſuch time as they have raiſed devotion in the heart. Such exerciſes would greatly aſſiſt to overcome that gloominess and ſcepticiſm, which ſometimes hang about our conceptions of the inviſible world, and by their reiterated impreſſions generate the cauſes of aſſent. We have examples of this in the Old Teſtament, particularly in the *Pſalms*; and the writers do not ſeem to have been eminent for any peculiar depth in curious inquiries. Men of the ordinary ranks in life in theſe times have as much probably of the myſteries of nature

nature unfolded to them, as great ſaints in ancient times; ſo that they want nothing to enable them to draw the ſame faith and devotion from the works of creation, but the ſame earneſt deſire to do it.

Thirdly, An upright heart, and a ſincere endeavour to do our whole duty, are neceſſary to ſupport our faith, after it is generated. While any ſin remains unconquered, while there are any ſecret miſgivings, the idea of God will be ſo uneaſy to the mind, as not to recur frequently; men will ſeek for refuge in vain amuſements; and the falſe hopes of this world will exclude the real ones of another, and make religion appear like a dream. This is the caſe with far the greateſt part of mankind; they *live rather by ſight than faith*; and are not ſufficiently aware, that a *little leaven leavens the whole lump*, and that one favourite purſuit of this world totally eclipſes thoſe glories of the other, that ſight of *the inviſible God*, which the *pure in heart*, like *Moſes*, are favoured with. The ſame partiality of our obedience and devotion is the cauſe, that the writings of the Old and New Teſtaments do not at once convince all, who peruſe them, of their divine authority, and of the conſequent truth of revealed religion. We judge of the frame of men's minds by that of our own, as appears from the theory of aſſociation; and whatever differs in a great degree from our own, puts on the appearance of ſomething romantic and incredible. This is evident in the daily intercourſes of human life. Corrupt and deſigning men put the falſeſt and moſt unnatural conſtructions upon the actions of the bulk of mankind, and often deceive themſelves thereby; and the bulk of mankind are quite at a loſs to conceive and believe the poſſibility of very heroical, generous, pious actions. And thus profane men turn into ridicule paſſages in the ſcriptures, which demand the higheſt admiration and applauſe; and men of inferior degrees of goodneſs, though they do

do not aſſent to this, are a little ſtaggered at it. But they who *will do the will* of God, will ſoon perceive the *doctrine* of the ſcriptures to be *from him*; they who will preſs forward to the perfection of *Moſes*, *Daniel*, St. *Peter*, or St. *Paul*, will not only acquit them readily of the charge of enthuſiaſm and impoſture, but will alſo ſee and feel experimentally ſuch unqueſtionable criterions of truth, ſuch a reality, in their words and actions, as will diſpel all the miſts of ſcepticiſm and infidelity, with regard either to natural or revealed religion.

It is much to be wiſhed, that theſe things were ſeriouſly weighed, and laid to heart, by thoſe half-pious perſons, who abſtain from groſs ſins, and *ſeek, though they do not ſtrive, to enter in at the ſtrait gate, who are not far from the kingdom of God.* Theſe perſons might, by a little more attention to the word and works of God in a practical way, and *caſting away the ſin that does moſt eaſily beſet them*, not only arrive at that *full aſſurance of faith*, which is our greateſt happineſs in this world, and the earneſt of an eternal crown hereafter, but alſo *let their light ſo ſhine before men, as that they, ſeeing their good works, would glorify their Father, which is in heaven.*

OF THE FEAR OF GOD.

The immediate conſequence of faith in God, in its imperfect ſtate, is fear. And though love does ariſe alſo, yet it is faint and tranſient for a long time, whereas the fear is ſtrong and vivid, and recurs generally with every recollection of the divine attributes. The cauſe of all this is unfolded in theſe papers. For, fear being the off pring of bodily pain, and this being much more acute than bodily pleaſure, the parent of love, it follows that fear muſt, in general, be ſtronger than love in their naſcent ſtate. The auguſt ideas of infinite time and ſpace, of the glories of heaven, and the torments of hell,

of

of the great works of the creation, &c. which accompany the idea of God, farther contribute to agitate the mind, and to carry it within the limits of pain or fear. At the same time we see, that these terrifying ideas, when mixed with those which generate love, and moderated by frequent recurrency, and other means, so as to fall back within the limits of pleasure, must greatly increase our love, and other pleasing affections, exerted towards the Deity. We are to inquire therefore, both how the fear of God may most effectually be generated, and how it may be converted most speedily into love and delight in God. And the answer will be, that we must make use of the means before recommended for the generation and increase of faith, viz. the study of the word and works of God, and a sincere endeavour to discharge the whole of our duty.

That the last is necessary to keep up the fear of God, may appear, inasmuch as those who continue to disobey, must, by degrees, fall into insensibility and callosity; the frequent returns of the ideas of guilt and fear make them sit easier upon the mind, at the same time that the remaining uneasiness keeps these ideas, with all their associates, out of view, in a great measure, as has been mentioned already.

OF GRATITUDE TOWARDS GOD.

Gratitude or thankfulness to God arises from the recollection of benefits received, just as that to men. And if we could see and feel practically and perpetually, that God is the sole spring of all action, our gratitude to God would absorb all kinds and degrees of it paid to men. Could we also look with the eye of faith into futurity, and be convinced really, that *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what things God has prepared for such as love him*, that *all things work together for their good*, trials and afflictions as

much, or more than any thing elſe, that every creature ſhall love, and bleſs, and praiſe God at laſt, and every one partake of the happineſs of all the reſt, whilſt yet we all, who are thus heirs of an exceſs of glory, perfection, and happineſs, are creatures of yeſterday, called forth from nothing by God's almighty word; if, farther, we conſider, that the Son of God became fleſh, took our infirmities and ſorrows, and at laſt died for us, God condeſcending thus to recommend and evidence his infinite love to us; our hearts could not but overflow with ſuch gratitude, as even to overpower our faith for a while. We ſhould then acknowledge, that all we are, and have, and hope for, are from him; we ſhould praiſe him for all the bleſſings paſt, preſent, and future, which we receive in our own perſons, or in thoſe of our fellow-creatures; and deſire nothing ſo ardently, as to be admitted into his preſence, and the ſociety of thoſe happy beings, who reſt not day and night, ſaying *holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

OF HOPE AND TRUST IN GOD, AND RESIGNATION TO HIS WILL.

Hope and truſt in God differ only in degree, the laſt being a firmer hope, and, as it were, an aſſurance of the favour of God to ourſelves in particular; and that he will provide for all our wants. Reſignation is the ſame hope and truſt exerted, notwithſtanding that preſent appearances may be contrary thereto: it is the ſubmiſſion of our own wills and judgments to God's, with an entire confidence in his care and goodneſs. Let us endeavour to place this hope, truſt, and reſignation, upon a ſure foundation, laid in the word and works of God.

Firſt, then, The ſcriptures give the ſtrongeſt and plaineſt aſſurances, that all thoſe who love and obey God here, will be admitted to pure, exalted, and eternal happineſs at the expiration of this life. If therefore

therefore *our hearts do not condemn us*, we *may have this confidence in him*; we may have an entire hope and truſt in him, as to the moſt weighty of all points, our eternal ſalvation. And though natural reaſon could not have diſcovered this ineſtimable hope to us, though it was not able *to bring life and immortality to light*, Chriſt being the only *ſure and ſteadfaſt anchor* of that hope, which reaches *beyond the veil* of death; yet it readily concurs with all the ſcripture declarations of this kind, and even affords a comfortable probability of itſelf, after we have once been enlightened by revelation.

Secondly, The ſcriptures, the voice of reaſon, and careful obſervation, all concur to aſſure us, that a ſecret providence attends upon the good; protects and bleſſes them in the events of the preſent life, ordinary and extraordinary; delivers them in great trials and afflictions; and diſpoſes every incident and circumſtance in ſuch a manner, as they would wiſh and deſire for themſelves, could they judge aright, and take the whole of things into their view. Now the full perſuaſion of this would be a moſt endearing motive to truſt and confidence in God. For the things of this life, however inconſiderable when compared to thoſe of another, do moſt ſenſibly affect even good men; and, till they can arrive at a due indifference to this world, it is highly requiſite, that they ſhould turn their exceſs of ſenſibility into a motive to gratitude and truſt.

Thirdly, The aſſurance that all our afflictions are the chaſtiſements of our heavenly Father, and equally productive of happineſs with the other events of our lives, as mentioned in the laſt paragraph, enables us to reſign ourſelves. The higheſt act of this kind is, for the moſt part, in the article of death, when we are ſurrounded with infirmity, pain, and darkneſs, and when all inferior comforts muſt be given up. Now this theopathetic affection of

reſignation, though it is in its firſt ſtate painful, and difficult to corrupt nature; yet in its progreſs it becomes eaſy, and at laſt affords the deepeſt peace and ſatisfaction. By reſigning all, we are delivered from every anxiety and diſquietude, and enter upon the next period of our exiſtence, with an impartiality and freedom, that qualifies us to enjoy whatever the order of providence beſtows. And unleſs we were exerciſed with ſome trials and temptations of this kind, unleſs our wills were ſometimes diſappointed, we ſhould at laſt be ſwallowed up by mere wilfulneſs, and purſue every object of deſire with an unconquerable eagerneſs and obſtinacy: we ſhould alſo idolize ourſelves, as the authors of our ſucceſs and bleſſings; or, at the utmoſt, ſhould look no farther than the courſe of nature, and blind unmeaning fate; whereas by learning a ready compliance with the will of God, however unexpected, we become partakers of his happineſs; for his will can never be diſappointed.

Fourthly, Thoſe perſons who believe the goodneſs of God, according to the third of the ſuppoſitions before-mentioned, *i. e.* who believe that he will advance all his creatures to unlimited happineſs ultimately, may much more eaſily reſign themſelves to God, in all reſpects, ſpiritual as well as temporal, on that account. But it appears, that very pious perſons have an entire reſignation, without any diſtinct conception or belief of this hypotheſis. They know and feel, as it were, that God is infinitely good, and that *the judge of all the earth muſt do right*; and, in this confidence, they leave the myſteries of his providence, his unſearchable judgments, to be unfolded in his own time, preſerving themſelves from diſquietude by an humble religious ſcepticiſm. But if it ſhould pleaſe God to diſplay the riches of his mercy in the full diſcovery and eſtabliſhment of the doctrine of univerſal reſtoration,

tion, in the latter times, which are now approaching, it will become us firſt to receive it with the higheſt gratitude, and then to uſe it as a means of accelerating our progreſs towards the abſolute reſignation of ourſelves, and all our fellow-creatures, into the hands of God.

Fifthly, As the conſiderations contained in the four laſt paragraphs may contribute to beget hope, truſt, and reſignation in us, ſo all the foregoing theopathetic affections, and particularly gratitude, with all the means of obtaining them, conſpire to the ſame purpoſe, as will be eaſily ſeen.

OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

The love of God may be conſidered as the laſt of the theopathetic affections, as before remarked; for they all end in it, and it is the ſum total of them all. In its firſt riſe, it muſt, like all the reſt of them, reſemble the ſympathetic one of the ſame name; and thus it differs from the reſt in *their* firſt riſe, and is, as it were, contrary to fear. In its firſt riſe it is often tinctured with fondneſs and familiarity, and leans much towards enthuſiaſm; as, on the other hand, the fear is often at firſt a ſlaviſh ſuperſtitious dread. By degrees the fear and love qualify each other; and, by uniting with the other theopathetic affections, they all together coaleſce into a reverential, humble, filial love, attended with a peace, comfort, and joy, that paſs all belief of thoſe who have not experienced it; ſo that they look upon the diſcourſes and writings of thoſe who have, to be either hypocriſy, or romantic jargon. The book of *Pſalms* affords the ſublimeſt and moſt correct expreſſions of this kind, and can never be too much ſtudied by thoſe who would cheriſh, puriſy, and perfect in themſelves a devout frame of mind. And this ſingle circumſtance, excluſive of all other conſiderations, appears to me a moſt convincing proof of

the divine authority of this book, and conſequently of the reſt of the books of the Old and New Teſtament. But they have all the ſame evidence in their favour, in their reſpective degrees; they are all helps to beget in us the love of God, and teſts whether we have it or no; and he who *meditates day and night in the law of God*, joining thereto the practical contemplation of his works, as preſcribed by the ſcriptures, and the *purification of his hands and heart*, will ſoon arrive at that devout and happy ſtate, which is ſignified by the love of God. I will here add ſome practical conſequences reſulting from what has been advanced concerning the theopathetic affections.

Firſt, then, Though an exceſs of paſſion of every kind, ſuch as is not under the command of the voluntary power, is to be avoided, as dangerous and ſinful; yet we muſt take care to ſerve God, with our affections, as well as our outward actions; and indeed, unleſs we do the firſt, we ſhall not long continue to do the laſt, the internal frame of our minds being the ſource and ſpring, from whence our external actions flow. God, who gives us all our faculties and powers, has a right to all; and it is a ſecret diſloyalty and infidelity, not to pay the tribute of our affections. They are evidently in our power, immediately or mediately; and therefore he who goes to his profeſſion, occupation, or amuſements, with more delight and pleaſure than to his exerciſes of devotion, his reading and meditation upon divine ſubjects, and his prayers and praiſes, whoſe *ſoul is not athirſt for the living God*, and *the water of life*, may aſſuredly conclude, that he is not arrived at the requiſite degree of perfection; that he ſtill hankers after *mammon*, though he may have ſome real deſires, and earneſt reſolutions, with reſpect to God.

Secondly,

Secondly, Though this be true in general, and a truth of the greateſt practical importance; yet there are ſome ſeaſons, in which all the theopathetic affections, and many, in which thoſe of the delightful kind, are languid, and that even in perſons that are far advanced in purity and perfection. Thus the enthuſiaſtic raptures, which often take place in the beginning of a religious courſe, by introducing an oppoſite ſtate, diſqualify ſome; a *Judaical* rigour and exactitude in long exerciſes, bodily diſorders, &c. others, from feeling God to be their preſent joy and comfort. So that the fervours of devotion are by no means in exact proportion to the degree of advancement in piety; we can by no means make them a criterion of our own progreſs, or that of others. But then they are always ſome preſumption; and it is far better, that they ſhould have ſome mixture even of enthuſiaſm, than not take place at all. As to thoſe, who are in the dry and dejected ſtate, the fear of God is, for the moſt part, ſufficiently vivid in them. Let them therefore frequently recollect, that the fear of God is a ſcripture criterion and ſeal of the elect, as well as love. Let them conſider, that this trial muſt be ſubmitted to, as much as any other, till *patience have her perfect work*; that it is more purifying than common trials; that the ſtate of fear is far more ſafe, and a much ſtronger earneſt of ſalvation, than premature and ecſtatic tranſports; and that, if they continue faithful, it will end in love, probably during this life, certainly in another. Laſtly, That no feeble minded perſon may be left without comfort, if there be any one who doubts whether he either loves or fears God, finding nothing but dulneſs, anxiety and ſcrupuloſity, within him, he muſt be referred to his external actions, as the ſureſt criterion of his real intentions, in this confuſed and diſorderly ſtate of the affections; and at the ſame

time admoniſhed not to depend upon his external righteouſneſs, which would breed an endleſs ſcrupuloſity, and an endeavour after an uſeleſs exactitude, but to take refuge in the mercy of God through Jeſus Chriſt.

Laſtly, The cultivation of the love of God in ourſelves by the methods here recommended, and all others that ſuit our ſtate and condition, with a prudent caution to avoid enthuſiaſm on one hand, and ſuperſtition on the other, is the principal means for preſerving us from dejection of every kind, and freeing us, if we be fallen into it. Worldly ſorrows muſt by degrees die away, becauſe worldly deſires, their ſources will. And this progreſs will be much accelerated by the impreſſions of a contrary nature, which gratitude, hope, love towards God, will make upon the mind. As to the dejection, which relates to another world, it generally ends, as has been frequently remarked already, in the oppoſite ſtate, being its own remedy and cure; but all direct endeavours after the true and pure love of God muſt aſſiſt. It is much to be wiſhed, that low-ſpirited perſons of all kinds would open themſelves without reſerve to religious friends, and particularly to ſuch as have paſſed through the ſame dark and diſmal path themſelves, and, diſtruſting their judgments, would reſign themſelves for a time to ſome perſon of approved experience and piety. Theſe would be like guardian angels to them; and as our natures are ſo communicative, and ſuſceptible of infection good and bad, they would by degrees infuſe ſomething of their own peaceable, cheerful, and devout ſpirit into them. But all human ſupports and comforts are to be at laſt reſigned; we muſt have no *Comforter, no God, but one*; and happy are they who make haſte towards this central point, in which alone we can *find reſt to our ſouls.*

SCHO-

SCHOLIUM.

If we conſider the love of the world, the fear of God, and the love of God, in the firſt ratio which they bear to each other, it will appear, that the love of the world is infinitely greater than the fear of God, and the fear infinitely greater than the love; ſo that the fear of God is a middle proportional between the love of the world and the love of God, in the firſt or naſcent ratio of theſe affections. In like manner, if we take their laſt ratio, or that in which the love of the world, and the fear of God, vaniſh into the love of God, the love of the world will be infinitely leſs than the fear of God, and the fear infinitely leſs than the love; ſo that the fear of God will ſtill be a middle proportional between the love of the world and the love of God. Let us ſuppoſe the fear of God to be a middle proportional between the love of the world and the love of God in all the intermediate ſtates of theſe affections, from their firſt riſe in infancy, till their ultimate abſorption and evaneſcence in the love of God, and ſee how this ſuppoſition will tally with experience, and how each affection varies in reſpect of the other two. Call therefore the love of the world W, the fear of God F, and the love of God L. Since then $W : F :: F : L$, $W = \frac{F^2}{L}$. If now F be ſuppoſed to remain the ſame $W :: \frac{1}{L}$, *i. e.* every diminution of the love of the world will increaſe the love of God, and *vice verſa*; ſo that, if the love of the world be nothing, the love of God will be infinite, alſo infinitely greater than the fear, *i. e.* we ſhall be infinitely happy. If, on the contrary, the love of the world be greater than the love of God, the fear will alſo be greater than it, and our religion be chiefly anxiety and ſuperſtition. If, farther, F, ſuppoſed ſtill to remain the ſame, be greater than W, it is our

trueſt intereſt to diminiſh W as much as we can, becauſe then the gain in L is far greater than the loſs in W. If L remain the ſame, then $W = F^2$, *i. e.* every increaſe of W will increaſe F alſo, *i. e.* every increaſe of the love of the world will increaſe the fear of God, which therefore, ſince the love is not increaſed by ſuppoſition, muſt incline to a ſuperſtitious dread: as, on the contrary, if W vaniſhes, F muſt vaniſh alſo, *i. e.* the love of the world and fear being both annihilated, we ſhall receive pure happineſs, of a finite degree, from the love of God. If W remain the ſame, then $F^2 :: L$, *i. e.* every acceſſion made to the fear of God will be the cauſe of a greater acceſſion to the love, and every acceſſion to the love the cauſe of only a leſs acceſſion to the fear, *i. e.* we ſhall be gainers upon the whole by all motives either to the fear or love of God, loſers by all contrary motives. For if F be ſuppoſed even infinite, L will be infinito-infinite, *i. e.* will abſorb it infinitely; and if F be infinitefimal, L will be infinito-infinitefimal, *i. e.* we ſhall become mere ſelfiſh worldlings which is the caſe with thoſe practical atheiſts, who ſucceed in their endeavours to put God, and a future ſtate, out of their thoughts, that they may give themſelves up to this world. W now occupies the place of L, and extinguiſhes both F and it, *i. e.* ſelf and the world are their God. Upon the whole, it follows from this ſpeculation concerning the quantities W, F, and L, that W ought to be diminiſhed, and F and L to be increaſed, as much as poſſible, that ſo W may be indefinitely leſs than F, and F indefinitely leſs than L, *i. e.* we ourſelves indefinitely happy in the love of God, by the previous annihilation of ſelf and the world. And it may not perhaps be quite unuſeful to have repreſented this moſt important of all concluſions, with the ſteps that lead to it, in this new and compendious light.

PROP.

PROP. LXXIII.

To deduce practical Rules concerning the Manner of expreſſing the theopathetic Affections by Prayer, and other religious Exerciſes.

THERE cannot be a more fatal deluſion, than to ſuppoſe, that religion is nothing but a divine philoſophy in the ſoul; and that the foregoing theopathetic affections may exiſt and flouriſh there, though they be not cultivated by devout exercifes and expreſſions. Experience, and many plain obvious reaſons, ſhew the falſehood and miſchievous tendency of this notion; and the theory of theſe papers may furniſh us with other reaſons to the ſame purpoſe, of a deeper and more ſubtle nature. It follows from this theory, that no internal diſpoſitions can remain long in the mind, unleſs they be perpetually nouriſhed by proper aſſociations, *i. e.* by ſome external acts. This therefore may be conſidered as a ſtrong argument for frequent prayer.

But, Secondly, Though God be in himſelf infinite in power, knowledge, goodneſs, and happineſs, *i. e.* acquainted with all our wants, ready and able to ſupply them, and incapable of change through our entreaties and importunities; yet, as he repreſents himſelf to us both in his word and works in the relation of a father and governor, our aſſociated nature compels us, as it were, to apply to him in the ſame way as we do to earthly fathers and governors; and, by thus compelling us, becomes a reaſon for ſo doing. If God's incomprehenſible perfection be ſuppoſed to exclude prayer, it will equally exclude all thoughts and diſcourſes concerning him; for theſe are all equally ſhort and unworthy of him; which is direct atheiſm.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Though the hypotheſis of mechaniſm may ſeem at firſt ſight to make prayer ſuperfluous and uſeleſs; yet, upon farther conſideration, it will be found quite otherwiſe. For if all things be conducted mechanically, *i. e.* by means; then prayer may be the means of procuring what we want. Our ignorance of the manner in which things operate, is not the leaſt evidence againſt their having a real operation. If all be conducted mechanically, ſome means muſt be made uſe of for procuring our wants. The analogy of all other things intimates, that theſe means muſt proceed in part from man. The analogy taken from the relations of father and governor ſuggeſts prayer. It follows therefore, according to the mechanical hypotheſis, that prayer is one of the principal means, whereby we may obtain our deſires.

Fourthly, If all theſe reaſons were ſet aſide, the preſſing nature of ſome of our wants would extort prayers from us, and therefore juſtify them.

Fifthly, In like manner, the theopathetic affections, if they be ſufficiently ſtrong, will break forth into prayers and praiſes, as in the authors of the *Pſalms*, and other devout perſons.

Laſtly, The ſcriptures direct and command us to pray, *to pray always, in every thing, to give thanks*; and ſupport the foregoing and ſuch like reaſons for prayer and praiſe. And this removes all doubt and ſcruple, if any ſhould remain from the infinite nature and majeſty of God. We may be ſatisfied from the ſcriptures, that we have the privilege to pray, to expoſe all our wants, deſires, joys, and griefs, to our Creator; and that he will hear us, and help us.

As to the time, manner, and requiſites of prayer, we may make the following obſervations.

Firſt, That words are of great uſe in the moſt private prayer, becauſe of the aſſociations transferred upon them, and which therefore they excite in the mind.

mind. But then, as there are internal ſentiments and combinations of theſe, to which no words can correſpond, we muſt not confine the noble privilege of prayer and praiſe to our languages, which are the offſpring of the confuſion at *Babel*. There are therefore proper ſeaſons and occaſions for mental prayer, for the tendency and aſpiration of the heart to God without words, as well as for vocal prayer. And indeed all private vocal prayer ſeems to admit of and require mental prayer, at ſhort intervals, in order to fix our attention, and exalt our affections, by giving ſcope to the ſecundarily automatic workings of a devout heart.

Secondly, Forms of prayer, compoſed by perſons of a devout ſpirit, are of uſe to all at certain times, for aſſiſting the invention, and exciting fervency; and in the beginning of a religious courſe they ſeem to be neceſſary, as they certainly are for children. But it would be a great hindrance to the growth and perfection of our devotion, always to keep to forms. The heart of every particular perſon alone knows its own bitterneſs, its deſires, guilt, fears, hopes, and joys; and it will be impoſſible to open ourſelves without reſerve, and with a filial love and confidence in God, unleſs we do it of ourſelves, in ſuch words as the then preſent ſtate of mind, when under a vigorous ſenſe of the divine preſence, ſhall ſuggeſt.

Thirdly, A regularity as to the times of private devotion helps to keep perſons ſteady in a religious courſe, and to call them off again and again from purſuing and ſetting their hearts upon the vanities of the world. And we may affirm in particular, that the morning and evening ſacrifice of private prayer and praiſe ought never to be diſpenſed with, in ordinary caſes, not even by perſons far advanced in the ways of piety. It ſeems alſo very conſonant to the true ſpirit of devotion, to have ſet hours of

prayer

prayer in the courſe of the day, as memorials and means of begetting this ſpirit, which, however, cannot be obſerved by the bulk of the world with exactneſs. Laſtly, It will be of great uſe to accuſtom ourſelves to certain ejaculations upon the various particular occaſions, that occur in the daily courſe of each perſon's buſineſs and profeſſion. It is true indeed, that all theſe rules are of the nature of *Judaical* rites and ceremonies; but then let it be conſidered, that even in chriſtian countries every man muſt be a *Jew* in effect, before he can arrive at *chriſtian* liberty, and be able to worſhip God *in ſpirit, and in truth*, and indeed in order to arrive thither. Times, forms, and rules of devotion, are ſchool-maſters that ſerve to bring us to Chriſt. As for thoſe perſons who are ſo far advanced, as to walk with God continually, who ſanctify the minuteſt actions by a perpetual dedication of them to God, I do not preſume to inſtruct them. *Their anointing teaches them all things.*

Fourthly, The matter of our prayers muſt be different, according to the ſtate that we are in; for in prayer we ought always to lay our real caſe, whatever it be, before God. Confeſſion of ſins, and petition for graces, are the moſt uſeful and requiſite for young penitents, and muſt always have a conſiderable ſhare in thoſe who are farther advanced. But when the heart overflows with joy and gratitude to God, and tender love to others, which is more frequently the caſe with thoſe, who have *kept* their *firſt love* for ſome time, it is eaſy to ſee, that praiſe and interceſſion muſt be moſt natural and ſuitable. Temporal wants ought not to be forgotten. We are to acknowledge God in every thing; conſider him as our father, and only friend, upon all occaſions; place no confidence in our own wiſdom or ſtrength, or in the courſe of nature; have moderate deſires, and be ready to give up even theſe. Now prayer, with expreſs

expreſs acts of reſignation, in reſpect of external things, has a tendency to beget in us ſuch diſpoſitions. However, I do not extend this to ſuch perſons as are reſigned to God in all things, temporal and ſpiritual, for themſelves as well as for others, who deſiring nothing but that the will of God may be done, ſee alſo that it is done, acquieſce and rejoice in it.

Fifthly, Prayer muſt always be accompanied by faith, *i. e.* we muſt not only look up to God, as our ſole refuge, but as an effectual one. He that believes the exiſtence and attributes of God really and practically, will have this entire confidence, ſo as to be aſſured that the thing deſired of God will be granted, either preciſely as deſired, or in ſome way more ſuitable to his circumſtances; an act of reſignation being here joined to one of faith. How far our Saviour's directions, concerning faith in prayer, are an encouragement and command to expect the preciſe thing deſired, is very doubtful to me. However, we may certainly learn from his example, that reſignation is a neceſſary requiſite in prayer; that we ought always to ſay, *Nevertheleſs not my will, but thine be done.*

Sixthly, Public prayer is a neceſſary duty, as well as private. By this we publicly profeſs our obedience to God through Chriſt; we excite and are excited by others to fervency in devotion, and to chriſtian benevolence; and we have a claim to the promiſe of Chriſt to thoſe who are aſſembled together in his name. The chriſtian religion has been kept alive, as one may ſay, during the great corruption and apoſtaſy, by the public worſhip of God in churches; and it is probable, that religious aſſemblies will be much more frequent than they now are, whenever it ſhall pleaſe God to put it into the hearts of chriſtians to proceed to the general converſion of all nations. We ought therefore to prepare ourſelves for, and haſten

haſten unto, this glorious time, as much as poſſible, by joining together in prayers for this purpoſe; and *ſo much the more, as we ſee the day approaching.*

Laſtly, Family prayer, which is ſomething between the public prayers of each church, and the private ones of each individual, muſt be neceſſary, ſince theſe are. The ſame reaſons are eaſily applied. And I believe it may be laid down as a certain fact, that no maſter or miſtreſs of a family can have a true concern for religion, or be a child of God, who does not take care to worſhip God by family prayer. Let the obſervation of the fact determine.

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

OF THE REGARD DUE TO THE PLEASURES AND PAINS OF THE MORAL SENSE IN FORMING THE RULE OF LIFE.

PROP. LXXIV.

The moral Senſe ought to be made the immediate Guide of our Actions on all ſudden Emergencies; and therefore its Pleaſures may be conſidered as making Part of our primary Purſuit.

In deducing rules for ſocial conduct above, I laid down the moral ſenſe as one, which ought to have great influence in the moſt explicit and deliberate actions. Now this is, in ſome meaſure, ſufficient to prove, that its pleaſures make part of our primary purſuit. I here propoſe to ſhew, that the moral ſenſe ought not only to have ſome, but the ſole influence, on emergent occaſions; and this will be a farther recommendation of its pleaſures.

That the moral ſenſe is ſuch an immediate guide, will appear for the following reaſons.

Firſt, Becauſe it offers itſelf in the various occurrences of life, at the ſame time producing its credentials. For it warns us beforehand, and calls us to account afterwards; it condemns or acquits; it rewards by the pleaſures of ſelf-approbation, or puniſhes by the pains of ſelf-condemnation. It appears therefore with the authority of a judge, and alſo of one who knows the hearts; and, by conſequence, it claims to be God's vicegerent, and the forerunner

of the ſentence which we may hereafter expect from him.

Secondly, The moral ſenſe is generated chiefly by piety, benevolence, and rational ſelf-intereſt; all which are explicit guides of life in deliberate actions. Since therefore theſe are excluded on ſudden occaſions, through the want of time to weigh and determine, it ſeems highly reaſonable to admit the moral ſenſe, which is their offspring, and whoſe dictates are immediate, for their ſubſtitute.

Thirdly, The greatneſs, the permanency, and the calm nature of the pleaſures of the moral ſenſe, with the horrors, and conſtant recurrency, of the ſenſe of guilt, are additional arguments to ſhew, that theſe pleaſures and pains were intended for the guides of life, and the pleaſures for a primary purſuit.

Fourthly, The mechanical generation of the pleaſures and pains of the moral ſenſe may by ſome be thought an objection to the reaſoning here uſed; but it will appear otherwiſe, upon due conſideration. For all the things which have evident final cauſes, are plainly brought about by mechanical means; ſo that we may argue either way, viz. either from ſeeing the mechanical means, to the exiſtence of a final cauſe, not yet diſcovered; or from the exiſtence of a final cauſe, to that of the mechanical means, not yet diſcovered. Thus a perſon who ſhould take notice, that milk always appeared in the breaſts of the dam at the proper ſeaſon for the young animal, might conclude that this was effected mechanically; or, if he firſt ſaw, that milk muſt be brought mechanically into the breaſts, ſoon after the birth of the young, he might conclude, that this milk would be of ſome uſe; and, from a very little farther recollection, might perceive that it was for the nouriſhment of the newborn animal. In like manner, if any one ſees, that a power, like that of conſcience, muſt be generated in the human mind, from the frame of it, compared with

with the impreſſions made upon it by external objects, he may be aſſured, that this power muſt have ſome uſe; and a very little reflection upon the divine attributes, and the circumſtances of mankind, will ſhew that its peculiar uſe muſt be that of a guide and governor.

If we could ſuppoſe the moral ſenſe to be either an inſtinct impreſſed by God, or the neceſſary reſult of the eternal reaſons and relations of things, independent of aſſociation, it ought ſtill to be conſidered as a guide of life. For ſince the favourers of each of theſe ſuppoſitions maintain, that the moral ſenſe is entirely coincident with the precepts of benevolence and piety; it muſt, according to them, be made their ſubſtitute upon emergent occaſions.

PROP. LXXV.

To deduce practical Rules for the Regulation and Improvement of the moral Senſe.

THERE are three things principally neceſſary in the conduct of the moral ſenſe. Firſt, That it extend to all the actions of moment, which occur in the intercourſes of human life; and be a ready monitor to us on ſuch occaſions. Secondly, That it ſhould not deſcend to minute and trifling particulars; for then it would check benevolence, and turn the love of God into a ſuperſtitious fear. And, Thirdly, That its informations be in all caſes agreeable to piety and benevolence, whoſe ſubſtitute it is.

Now it will be eaſily ſeen, that, for the right conduct of our moral ſenſe in all theſe particulars, it will be neceſſary for us to be much employed in the practical ſtudy of the ſcriptures, and of the writings of good men of all denominations, in obſerving the living examples of ſuch, in calling ourſelves to account frequently, in prayer, and other exerciſes of

devotion, in endeavouring to convert all the ſympathetic and theopathetic affections into the love of God, in aiming at a truly catholic and charitable ſpirit, and in walking faithfully, according to the dictates of benevolence, piety, and the moral ſenſe, ſuch as they are at preſent. For *to him that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance.* Some of theſe directions are more particularly ſuited to correct one defect in the moral ſenſe, ſome another; but they will all conſpire in purifying and perfecting it.

General

General COROLLARIES *to the laſt* SEVEN SECTIONS.

COR. I. WE may now, by reviewing the ſeven laſt ſections, judge how much the chriſtian morality is ſuperior to the pagan, in ſublimity and purity. The pagan morality was comprehended under the four cardinal virtues of prudence, juſtice, fortitude, and temperance; and theſe were ſo explained and underſtood by the pagans, as to omit many neceſſary chriſtian virtues, and allow, or even recommend ſome great enormities. I will claſs a few particulars of this kind under the reſpective heads of ſenſation, imagination, ambition, ſelf-intereſt, ſympathy, theopathy, and the moral ſenſe.

The pagan virtue of temperance prohibited all groſs exceſſes in eating and drinking, and many acts of lewdneſs. But it fell far ſhort of the chriſtian precepts, in regard to the external actions; and ſeems no ways to have extended to the regulation of the thoughts.

The pagan fortitude enjoined great patience and perſeverance in difficulties, pains, and dangers. But it was, in part, founded in pride; and ſo was oppoſite to the chriſtian fortitude, whoſe ſtrength lies in its weakneſs, in a diffidence in ourſelves, and confidence in God. And how much the chriſtian was ſuperior in degree, as well as kind, may appear from the examples of the martyrs and confeſſors in the primitive times, who were of all ranks, profeſſions, ages, and ſexes, and of innumerable private perſons in the preſent, as well as all paſt ages of the church, who are able to *rejoice in tribulation*, and to do all things, through Chriſt that ſtrengtheneth them. They do not make a ſhew of themſelves to the world; that would be oſtentation, and vain-glory:

but thoſe who deſire to be animated by, and to imitate, ſuch living examples, may find them in every chriſtian country in the world.

As to the pleaſures of imagination, there ſeems to have been no reſtraint laid upon them by the pagan morality. Curioſity, and the ſtudy of the arts and ſciences for their own ſakes, were even recommended.

Ambition was, in like manner, eſteemed virtuous; and many kinds and degrees of humility were treated with reproach and contempt.

Groſs ſelf-intereſt was allowed in a much greater degree by the pagans, than it is amongſt chriſtians. The pagans ſcarce knew what refined ſelf-intereſt was; and they did not at all apprehend, that any objection lay againſt rational ſelf-intereſt, or that a purer motive to action was neceſſary.

Their benevolence was chiefly a love of relations, benefactors, and their country. They fell far ſhort of univerſal unlimited benevolence, equal to ſelf-love; and they allowed, and even recommended, taking vengeance on enemies, as an heroic, noble action.

As to the theopathetic affections of faith, fear, gratitude, hope, truſt, reſignation, and love, with the expreſſions of theſe in prayer and praiſe, they knew nothing of them in general. Polytheiſm, and impure notions of their deities, had quite depraved and ſtarved all their theopathetic affections. They were deſtitute of love, and their fear was ſuperſtition.

Laſtly, The conſequence of all this muſt be, and accordingly was, a proportional imperfection in the moral ſenſe. It was deficient in moſt things, erroneous in many, and needleſsly ſcrupulous in ſome. It occupied the place of the Deity; for the beſt amongſt the pagans idolized the innate ſenſe of *honeſty*, and the independent power of the mind, the *ſenſus honeſti*, and the τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν.

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I do not deny but that ſome heathen moraliſts may now and then have expreſſed themſelves in a manner ſuperior to what I have here deſcribed. But I ſpeak of the general tenor of their writings, and deſire that may be compared with the general tenor of the ſcriptures, of the fathers, and of the chriſtian divines of all ages.

Cor. 2. By a like review of the ſeven laſt ſections, we may diſcern more clearly and fully the relative nature of the virtues and vices, which has been already taken notice of; and thus both learn to be more candid and charitable in our judgments on the actions of others, and more earneſt and unwearied after perfection in ourſelves.

Cor. 3. Since it now appears fully, that the pleaſures and pains of the four firſt claſſes are to be ſubjected to thoſe of the three laſt, *i. e.* the pleaſures of thoſe foregone, and the pains accepted; whereas the pleaſures of theſe are to be choſen, and the pains avoided; I will here give, in one view, ſome principal motives to engage us thus to regulate our affections and actions.

Firſt, then, The great compoſure and peace of mind, which thoſe perſons enjoy, who make benevolence, piety, and the moral ſenſe, the rule of their lives, is a ſtrong inducement to us to imitate their example. As we deſire to learn all other arts from thoſe who practiſe them in the greateſt perfection, ſo ought we the art of living. The perſons in whom this peace is moſt obſervable, were the authors of the books of the Old and New Teſtaments; and theſe books may be diſtinguiſhed from all other books by this remarkable circumſtance, that the authors appear to have been quite free from this diſſatisfaction, doubt, care, and fear, which are ſo obvious in the diſcourſes and writings of other perſons. However, the ſame thing appears, in a leſs degree, in the diſcourſes of all good men, even heathens; as

in the diſcourſes of *Socrates* preſerved by *Plato* and *Xenophon*; and may be obſerved in the conduct and behaviour of all ſuch, by thoſe who are converſant with them. Eminently pious and benevolent perſons ſeem to be in poſſeſſion of ſome great ſecret, ſome *catholicon*, or philoſopher's ſtone. They paſs through life, unhurt, as to the peace of their minds, by the evils of it; and find abundant matter for praiſe and thankſgiving to God in it. All which appears to be owing to their being guided by the true principle of action.

Secondly, Death is certain, and neceſſarily attended with many terrifying aſſociations; and a future ſtate muſt, even upon the ſlighteſt preſumption of its reality, be a matter of the greateſt concern to all thinking perſons. Now the frequent recurrency of theſe fears and anxieties muſt imbitter all guilty pleaſures, and even the more innocent trifling amuſements; which, though not glaringly oppoſite to duty, are yet beſides it, and foreign to it. And thus men live in bondage all their lives through the fear of death; more ſo than they are aware of themſelves (for men often neglect the fair examination of themſelves, ſo much as not to know their real ſtate, though obvious enough upon a due inquiry); and ſtill much more ſo, than they own and expreſs to others. But nothing can deliver men from this great evil, beſides entire rectitude of heart. While there is a conſciouſneſs of any wilful failure, of any unfairneſs, of prevarication with God, or a deſire and deſign to deceive one's ſelf, the terrors of religion rage with greater fury than in a ſtate of utter negligence, and diſregard to duty. A man cannot reſt, while he is double-minded, while he ſtrives and hopes to ſerve God and *mammon* together; but muſt either go forward in order to obtain true laſting peace, or backward to infatuate and ſtupefy himſelf. And this helps

helps us to account for the foregoing obſervation on the behaviour of truly good men.

Thirdly, It appears from the very frame of our natures, that we are not qualified for any great degrees of happineſs here, nor for an uninterrupted continuance of any degree, nor for the frequent returns of any particular pleaſure, bodily or mental. From all which it will follow, that a general hope, mixed with the cares, fears, and ſorrows of compaſſion and contrition, is the only pleaſure, that is attainable, laſting, or ſuitable to our preſent circumſtances.

Fourthly, Beſides the fears relating to death, and a future ſtate, all perſons who ſerve the world, muſt have very great ones in reſpect of the things of the world. A man muſt be *crucified to the world*, before his heart can be at eaſe concerning its pleaſures, honours, and profits. And as our pains are, in general, more exquiſite than our pleaſures; ſo is fear, worldly fear, the offspring of the firſt, greater in degree, than worldly hope, the offspring of the laſt; and, if it recurs often, will overbalance it; and muſt make a great deduction, upon all ſuppoſitions. Now devotion to God, though it does leſſen the hopes of this world, as well as the fears; yet it ſeems to leſſen the fears in a much quicker ratio; however, it certainly takes off their edge, and leaves ſo much hope and pleaſure, as to be a foundation for the duty of thankfulneſs to God.

Fifthly, An upright heart is neceſſary to our having a real influencing ſenſe and conviction of the divine amiableneſs and benevolence, and, conſequently, to our peace and comfort. When any dread, or ſlaviſh fear, attends the conception of the divine nature, a man can never think himſelf ſafe; but will always have anxieties and miſgivings. And our ideas of God muſt always be thus tainted with ſuperſtition, whatever our theory be, if our hearts be not

not right before him. We ſhall weakly and wickedly ſuppoſe and fear, that he *is ſuch a one as we ourſelves are*, whatever declarations we make, whatever demonſtrations we poſſeſs, to the contrary. And as this cannot but caſt a gloom upon the whole courſe of nature to the wicked, ſo the contrary perſuaſion is the principal ſource of joy and comfort to the good. They do in earneſt believe God to be their friend and father; they love him with a ſincere, though imperfect love; and are eaſily led, from the conſciouſneſs and inward feeling of this, to conſider him as pure and infinite love. And all theſe four laſt obſervations, put together, but eſpecially that of this paragraph, account for the facts mentioned in the firſt.

SECT. IX.

OF THE RULE OF FAITH.

PROP. LXXVI.

To inquire what Faith in natural and revealed Religion, or in the particular Tenets of Chriſtian Churches, is neceſſary for the Purification and Perfection of our Natures.

HAVING now ſhewn, that benevolence, piety, and the moral ſenſe, are to be the guides of life, and the compaſs by which we are to ſteer our courſe through the difficulties and dangers of this mixed, imperfect ſtate, it remains that we inquire, whether there be any rule of faith, reſulting or diſtinct from the foregoing rule of life, that is neceſſary to our preſent duty, or future ſalvation.

Firſt, then, Since piety is part of the foregoing rule of life, it is evident, that no one can comply with this rule, unleſs he be a ſincere deiſt at leaſt, *i. e.* unleſs he believe the exiſtence and attributes of God, his providence, a future ſtate, and the rewards and puniſhments of it.

Secondly, The evidence for the chriſtian religion ſeems to be ſo clear and ſtrong in all chriſtian countries, and that with reſpect to all ranks and conditions of men, that no perſon, who is previouſly qualified by benevolence, piety, and the moral ſenſe, in the manner deſcribed in the ſeven laſt ſections, can refuſe his aſſent to it. This I take to be a plain matter of obſervation, ſupported by the univerſal teſtimony of thoſe perſons, that attend to it; meaning by the chriſtian religion, the belief of the divine miſſion of *Moſes* and the prophets, of Chriſt and his apoſtles,

or

or the truth of the ſcriptures. Whoever therefore conducts himſelf by the foregoing rule, muſt believe revealed religion, as well as natural, if born in a chriſtian country. All unbelievers, where there is ſo much evidence, I had almoſt ſaid all doubters, ſeem to be culpable in a very high degree.

Thirdly, As faith in Chriſt is the reſult of a right diſpoſition of mind in chriſtian countries; ſo is this right diſpoſition, in its turn, the reſult of believing in Chriſt; and they increaſe one another reciprocally without limits. And though ſome perſons in the heathen world were conducted to great degrees of benevolence, and uprightneſs of mind, and even to ſome degrees of piety; yet were theſe perſons exceedingly rare, and the degrees far inferior to what is ordinarily to be found in chriſtian countries. This therefore is a ſtrong proof of the neceſſity of faith in revealed religion. All things elſe being alike, the perſon who believes in Chriſt will become ſuperior to him who does not, in proportion to the vigour of his faith. Which is alſo a plain and cogent reaſon, why thoſe, that are already chriſtians, ſhould labour to the utmoſt of their abilities in converting the barbarous nations, even though their preſent ignorance of revealed religion be excuſable in them. But there is far more reaſon to alarm and awaken, if poſſible, thoſe who diſbelieve in the midſt of light and evidence, *the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael*; ſince they not only want theſe motives and aſſiſtances to perfection, but are guilty of great prevarication and unfairneſs with themſelves, and ſhut their eyes againſt *the light, becauſe their deeds are evil.* If any unbeliever thinks this cenſure too ſevere, let him examine his own heart. Is he previouſly qualified by love to God, and to all the world, by a ſincere regard for, and obſervance of, natural religion? Is he chaſte, temperate, meek, humble,

humble, juſt, and charitable? Does he delight in God, in contemplating his providence, praying to him, and praiſing him? Does he believe a future ſtate, and expect it with hope and comfort? Is he not ſo fond of the praiſe of men, or ſo fearful of cenſure and ridicule, as to be aſhamed to own Chriſt? If the chriſtian religion be true, it muſt be of great importance; and, if of great importance, it is a duty of natural religion to inquire into it. The obligation therefore to examine ſeriouſly ſubſiſts in ſome degree, as long as there is any evidence for, any doubt of, the truth of revelation. For, if true, it muſt be of importance, whether we ſee that importance or not. He who determines, that it is of no importance, determines at once, that it is falſe. But it is too evident to all impartial obſervers, that thoſe who diſbelieve, or affect to diſbelieve, have not made a ſerious accurate inquiry; ſuch a one as they would make about a worldly concern of moment; but content themſelves, and endeavour to perplex others, with general objections, mixed, for the moſt part, with ridicule and raillery, things that are manifeſt hinderances in the ſearch after truth. However, this may be perhaps, too ſevere a cenſure, in reſpect of ſome; nay, we ought not to condemn any, but to conſider, that *to their own maſter they ſtand or fall.*

Fourthly, A nominal, or even a real, but merely hiſtorical and ſpeculative faith, is quite inſufficient, and falls infinitely ſhort of that which the foregoing rule of duty requires. And yet it is of ſome probable uſe to be reckoned among the number of believers, though a man be, for the preſent, inattentive; becauſe ſuch a one lies more in the way of conviction and influence; and is free from that great objection and difficulty to human nature, a reluctance to change even a nominal opinion. As to the perſon, who has a real, hiſtorical, ſpeculative faith,

i. e.

i. e. who ſees that the Old and New Teſtaments have the ſame and in many reſpects greater evidences for their truth and genuineneſs, than other books univerſally allowed, who is ready to acknowledge this, and to give reaſons for it of the ſame kind with thoſe that are admitted in ſimilar caſes, he poſſeſſes one of the principal requiſites for generating the true, practical, internal faith, *that overcomes the world*; and if he be not withheld by pride and ſelf-conceit, ſo as to reſt in this hiſtorical faith, as ſufficient of itſelf, will make much quicker advances, *cæteris paribus*, towards the true living faith, than a perſon deſtitute of the hiſtorical one. For the true living faith is that vivid ſenſe and perception of God, our Saviour, a future ſtate, and the other related ideas, that make them appear at once as realities, and become powerful and inſtantaneous motives to action. But it is very evident, that an hiſtorical faith muſt, by impreſſing and uniting theſe ideas during the time that they are conſidered, and reflected upon, produce the effects, the reality, above-deſcribed, in the ſame manner as the intereſted love of God does at laſt generate the pure diſintereſted love. And the calamities and ſorrows of human life will be much more likely to ſtrike him who is poſſeſſed of an hiſtorical faith, than a perſon ignorant of the ſubject.

It muſt, however, be acknowledged, that the real practical faith is by no means in exact proportion to the hiſtorical. Perſons of good diſpoſitions, of humble minds, who *pray without ceaſing*, who have been much afflicted, &c. have impreſſions of the religious kind excited in them with more vigour and facility than others. Yet ſtill no man can have the practical faith without ſome degree of the hiſtorical; and thoſe who have little of the hiſtorical are liable to be ſhaken, to *be turned about by every wind of doctrine*, and to be carried into extravagancies

cies by the zeal without knowledge. *What God hath joined together, let no man put aſunder.* It is the duty of every man, whether he have the practical faith or not, to inquire, to read the ſcriptures, and to meditate thereon; the neceſſary conſequence of which is an increaſe of the hiſtorical faith. It is alſo the duty of every chriſtian to give a reaſon for his faith, to preach the goſpel (for true chriſtians are a nation of prieſts in this ſenſe); which cannot be done without ſome knowledge of the hiſtorical evidences. Admitting therefore, that mere internal faith (if ſuch a thing be poſſible) did ſuffice to all other purpoſes, it will, however, be defective in this one moſt neceſſary duty of the chriſtian life. Though a mere good example will do much good, yet the ſame good example, accompanied with knowledge, and a rational faith will do more.

Fifthly, It ſeems entirely uſeleſs to all good purpoſes, to the promotion of piety and benevolence, in the preſent ſtate of things, to form any creeds, articles, or ſyſtems of faith, and to require an aſſent to theſe in words or writing. Men are to be influenced, even in reſpect of the principal doctrines of God's providence, a future ſtate, and the truth of the ſcriptures, by rational methods only, not by compulſion. This ſeems acknowledged on all hands. Why then ſhould harſher methods be uſed in things of confeſſedly leſs importance? It is true, that magiſtrates have a power from God to inflict puniſhment upon ſuch as diſobey, and to confine the natural liberty of acting within certain bounds, for the common good of their ſubjects. But all this is of a nature very foreign to the pretences for confining opinions by diſcouragements and puniſhments.

Thoſe who believe neither natural nor revealed religion practically, will be held by no reſtraints; they will appear to conſent to any thing, juſt as their intereſt

intereſt leads them. And this is the caſe of a great part of the ſubſcribers in all chriſtian communities. They have a mere nominal faith only, at the time of ſubſcribing, not even a ſpeculative or hiſtorical one: or if they have any degree of ſerioufneſs, and good impreſſions, they muſt do proportional violence to theſe by performing a religious act out of a mere intereſted view.

If the perſon be an earneſt believer of natural religion, but an unbeliever in reſpect of revealed (to ſuppoſe this poſſible for argument's ſake), he will not attempt any office in the chriſtian miniſtry. However, he ought not to be deprived of *civil* privileges, whilſt ſo many wicked nominal chriſtians are ſuffered to enjoy them.

Suppoſe the perſon required to ſubſcribe to be a ſpeculative hiſtorical believer, why ſhould his future inquiries be confined? How can he inquire honeſtly, if they be? How can a perſon be properly qualified to ſtudy the word of God, and to ſearch out its meaning, who finds himſelf previouſly confined to interpret it in a particular manner? If the ſubject matter of the article be of great importance to be underſtood and believed, one may preſume, that it is plain, and needs no article; if of ſmall importance, why ſhould it be made a teſt, or inſiſted upon? If it be a difficult, abſtruſe point, no one upon earth has authority to make an article concerning it. We are all brethren; there is no father, no maſter, amongſt us; we are helpers of, not lords over, each other's faith. If we judge from other branches of learning, as natural philoſophy, or phyſic, we ſhall there find, that the pure evidence of the things themſelves is ſufficient to overcome all oppoſition, after a due time. The doctrines of gravitation, of the different refrangibility of the rays of light, of the circulation of the blood, &c. can never be believed to any uſeful practical purpoſe, till they

they be examined and underſtood; and thoſe, who now believe them, affirm, that this is all that is neceſſary for their univerſal reception. If they ſhould be miſtaken in this, free examination would be ſo much the more requiſite.

The apoſtles' creed is ſo plain and clear, except in the three articles concerning the deſcent of Chriſt into hell, the holy catholic church, and the communion of ſaints, that no one who believes the truth of the ſcriptures, can heſitate about it; not even how to interpret the three forementioned articles, in a ſenſe agreeable to the ſcriptures. It is quite uſeleſs therefore to require an aſſent even to theſe articles. As to the metaphyſical ſubtleties, which appear in the ſubſequent creeds, they can at beſt be only human interpretations of ſcripture words; and therefore can have no authority. Words refer to words, and to grammatical and logical analogies, in an endleſs manner, in theſe things; and all the real foundation which we have is in the words of ſcripture, and of the moſt ancient writers, conſidered as helps, not authorities. It is ſufficient therefore, that a man take the ſcriptures for his guide, and apply himſelf to them with an honeſt heart, and humble and earneſt prayer; which things have no connection with forms and ſubſcriptions.

Nay, it ſeems needleſs, or enſnaring to ſubſcribe even to the ſcriptures themſelves. If to any particular canon, copy, &c. enſnaring, becauſe of the many real doubts in theſe things. If not, it is quite ſuperfluous from the latitude allowed. Yet ſtill it appears to me inconteſtable, that no careful impartial inquirer can doubt of the great truths of the ſcriptures, ſuch as the miraculous birth, life, death, reſurrection and aſcenſion of Chriſt, &c. or of the practical conſequences thence ariſing; and ſurely it cannot be neceſſarily requiſite, that a man ſhould believe more than theſe.

For, Laſtly, Let us ſuppoſe the perſon required to aſſent, or ſubſcribe, to be a real earneſt believer. It can ſcarce be ſuppoſed, that ſuch a perſon ſhould aſſent to any ſet of articles, ſo as honeſtly to affirm, that he would chooſe to expreſs his own ſenſe of the ſcripture language in theſe words. To ſtrain either the ſcriptures, or the articles, muſt be a very ungrateful taſk to an ingenuous man; and perhaps there may be ſo wide a difference in ſome inſtances in his opinion, that no ſtraining can bring them together. And thus ſome of the moſt earneſt believers are excluded from the chriſtian miniſtry, and from certain common privileges of ſociety, by a method, which ſuffers nominal wicked chriſtians to paſs without difficulty.

If it be objected, that, unleſs preachers ſubſcribe, they may teach different doctrines; I anſwer, that they do this, though they do ſubſcribe; and that in the moſt important practical points. If the ſcriptures cannot yet produce a true unity of opinion on account of our preſent ignorance, and the weakneſs and wickedneſs of our natures, how ſhould articles do this? Men can put as different ſenſes upon articles, as upon texts, and ſo diſpute without end. Which evidently appears to have been the caſe in the primitive church. Every deciſion, as ſoon as ſettled, became the ſource of a new diviſion between perſons, who yet ſtill agreed to the foregoing deciſion in words; till at laſt the whole efficacy and ſpirit of chriſtianity, was loſt in mere verbal diſputes. But the beſt anſwer is, that preachers ought entirely to confine themſelves to practical ſubjects, the deſcriptions of the virtues and vices, with the motives for and againſt each, the directions to attain the virtues, and avoid the vices; and this in all the various real circumſtances of human life. Learned inquiries have their uſe undoubtedly; but they are much better communicated

cated to the learned world by the preſs, than to a mixed aſſembly by the pulpit. It is a kind of ſacrilege to rob God's flock of the nouriſhment due to them from public preachings, and, in its ſtead, to run out upon queſtions, that miniſter no profit to the hearers, at leaſt to far the greateſt part.

As to the preſs, ſince all other men have the liberty of conveying their thoughts to the public that way, it is ſurely unfitting, that the miniſters of the goſpel ſhould be deprived of it. And, indeed, to lay any reſtraints, looks like diſtruſting the cauſe. There is undoubtedly a very bad uſe made of the preſs, and *woe to thoſe by whom offences come* to the little ones that believe in Chriſt! But it is to be hoped and preſumed, that the power of the wicked to do harm is not equal to the power of the good to do good, in this or any other ſuch neutral method of communicating infection, good and bad to the public. This would be to prefer barbarity and ignorance to the inſtruction and civilization of mankind. Learning, arts, and improvements of all kinds, are ſubſervient both to good and bad purpoſes; and yet ſtill the balance is probably on the ſide of good upon the whole, ſince God is all powerful, all wiſe, and all good. Theſe attributes muſt ever turn the ſcale to their own ſide, finitely in every finite portion of time, infinitely in infinite time. We need not fear therefore, but that true knowledge will at laſt be increaſed and prevail, that the wiſe and good will underſtand, the wicked be ſilenced and converted, and the church of Chriſt fill the whole earth. It is a great inſult offered to the truths of religion, to ſuppoſe that they want the ſame kind of aſſiſtance as impoſtures, human projects, or worldly deſigns. Let every man be allowed to think, ſpeak, and write, freely; and then the errors will combat one another, and leave truth unhurt.

Sixthly, Though creeds, articles, &c. ſeem to have no uſe now, but even to be prejudicial to the cauſe of truth in themſelves; yet it may be neceſſary to ſubmit to ſome forms of this kind in certain caſes; at leaſt, it no ways becomes a chriſtian to declaim againſt them in violent terms, or oppoſe them with bitterneſs, but merely, in a plain diſpaſſionate way, to repreſent the truth of the caſe, ſo as by degrees to draw men's zeal from theſe leſſer matters, and transfer it upon greater, *Let not him that eateth, deſpiſe him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth.* There may be good relative reaſons in both caſes. And it may be, and probably is the truth, that in the early ages of the church, whilſt chriſtians were Judaizers, entangled in externals, groſs in their conceptions, &c. theſe forms were neceſſary, *cæteris manentibus.* But now they grow old, and ſeem ready to die away, and to give place to the worſhip of God *in ſpirit, and in truth*; in which there is no *Papiſt, Proteſtant, Lutheran, Calviniſt, Trinitarian, Unitarian, Myſtic, Methodiſt*, &c. but all theſe diſtinctions are carried away like the chaff of the ſummer threſhing-floors. We are all chriſtians, we received this denomination in apoſtolic times, and ought to ſeek no other. Only let us take care to depart from iniquity, to have the true ſeal of God in our foreheads, not the mark of the beaſt. The real converſion of the heart from the idolatrous worſhip of pleaſure, honour, and profit, of ſenſation, imagination, ambition, and ſelf-intereſt, to ſerve the living God, is the only thing of importance; *circumciſion and uncircumciſion are equally nothing. Let every man abide in the ſame calling wherein he was called.* Only, where a plain act of inſincerity is required, this approaches to the caſe of eating in the idol's temple, and gives great offence to others.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, If we examine the doctrines which are chiefly conteſted among chriſtians by the oppoſite parties, it will appear, that the diſputes are, in great meaſure, verbal, and proceed from men's not knowing the true nature and uſe of words. Thus, if we conſider the doctrine of infallibility, the nature of words ſhews at once, that this could be of no uſe, ſince the deciſions of the infallible judge muſt be expreſſed in words, and conſequently be liable to be miſunderſtood by ſome or other of the readers, for the ſame reaſons as the ſcriptures are.—To ſay that Chriſt's body and blood are in the bread and wine ſo as that the ſenſible qualities of one become the ſenſible qualities of the other, would be to appeal to the ſenſes for aſſent, where they inſtantly reject the propoſition. To ſay that Chriſt's myſtical or glorified body is preſent in ſome way or other, is what no one can deny, becauſe nothing is really affirmed. The words ſeem to coaleſce into a verbal truth; but when we attempt to realize the propoſition, it vaniſhes. The ſcripture expreſſions concerning the myſtical body of Chriſt, and his union with the church, contain within them ſome moſt important and wonderful truths undoubtedly, but they are yet ſealed up from us.—In the diſputes concerning the trinity and incarnation of Chriſt, if the words *perſon*, *ſubſtance*, *nature*, &c. be uſed as in other caſes, or any way defined, the moſt expreſs contradictions follow: yet the language of the ſcriptures is moſt difficult, ſublime, and myſterious, in reſpect of the perſon of Chriſt; ſo that one cannot fall ſhort of paying all that honour to Chriſt, which the moſt orthodox believe to be required.—As to the doctrine of the ſatisfaction of Chriſt, it appears that he has done all for us that one being can do for another; and that it would be a moſt unjuſtifiable and narrow way of expreſſing ourſelves, to confine the benefits received from Chriſt to that

of mere example. But the firſt and moſt literal ſenſe of the words *ſacrifice*, *redemption*, &c. when realized, is evidently impoſſible; and we do not ſeem to be able to give any better general ſenſe to theſe words, than by ſaying, that they ſignify, that the ſufferings of one being are, by the order of God, made the means of happineſs to another. To adopt the ideas of *debt*, *wrath of God*, &c. in a ſtrict ſenſe, is anthropomorphitiſm. —— The introduction of new, unſcriptural, technical terms ſeems ſcarce juſtifiable, unleſs as far as one chriſtian brother may thereby endeavour to make the harmony and analogy of the ſcripture language to itſelf, and to the courſe of nature, more evident to another. But this is all *private interpretation*. And it often happens in theſe caſes, that an hypotheſis is taken up haſtily, in order to reconcile the ſcripture to itſelf, like thoſe philoſophical ones, which are not drawn from a number of concurring facts, but merely accommodated to a few particular appearances.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of the EXPECTATIONS *of* MANKIND, *here and hereafter, in* CONSEQUENCE *of their* OBSERVANCE *or* VIOLATION *of the* RULE *of* LIFE.

SECT. I.

OF THE EXPECTATIONS OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE PRESENT LIFE.

PROP. LXXVII.

It is probable, that moſt or all Men receive more Happineſs than Miſery in their Paſſage through the preſent Life.

SOME evidences for this propoſition have been given above, where it was alleged as one of the proofs of the goodneſs of God. Here we may conſider it, both as deducible from thoſe evidences, and from the goodneſs of God, previouſly eſtabliſhed upon independent principles.

For if we ſuppoſe God to be both infinitely benevolent, and the ſole cauſe of all things; if, farther, the relative appellations of governor, friend, and father, may with propriety be made the foundation of our inquiries into his diſpenſations in general (all

which I have endeavoured to prove above); we can ſcarce ſuppoſe, but that the remarkable period of our exiſtence, which commences at our birth, and ends with the death of the body, which we then brought into the world with us, will, upon the whole, afford us more pleaſure than pain. This is, at leaſt, our firſt and moſt natural preſumption, in the view of things here conſidered. However, it muſt always be remembered, that we are not proper judges of ſuch high ſpeculations; and that an over-balance of miſery in this life, or any other, is perfectly conſiſtent with the infinite goodneſs of God, even according to our ways of reaſoning, upon ſuppoſition that all his creatures become happy upon the whole at laſt, finitely or infinitely.

I chooſe therefore to reſt this propoſition chiefly upon certain intimations, and indirect evidences thereof, which are ſcattered up and down in the ſcriptures. Such are the bleſſing of God conferred upon *all* his creatures at their creation, his covenant with them *all* at the flood, the precepts to *all* to praiſe him, the mention of his being *loving to every man, of remembering mercy in judgment*, not being *extreme to mark what is done amiſs*, &c. Theſe are no direct proofs of the propoſition here advanced; but they leave ſuch impreſſions of love and mercy upon the mind, and ſeem intended to put us into ſuch a way of thinking and reaſoning, as lead to it. They afford therefore ſome preſumption in its favour, ſince nothing contrary thereto is to be found any where either in the word or works of God.

The murmurings, and bitter outcries, of men in a ſtate of ſuffering, are no more an evidence againſt this propoſition, than the extravagant mirth, and chimerical hopes, of unexperienced perſons, during health and proſperity, are for it. Neither of theſe take in the whole of the caſe.

PROP.

PROP. LXXVIII.

The Balance cannot be much in Favour even of the moſt happy, during the preſent Life.

For, Firſt, This is agreeable to the general experience of mankind. It is obvious, that life is chequered with good and evil in ſuch degrees and varieties, as that the firſt cannot prevail much. Agreeably to this, the experienced and diſpaſſionate, in reviewing their paſt life, will at leaſt affirm, that the happineſs has not greatly exceeded the miſery. And indeed the difficulty of proving the foregoing propoſition is a very ſufficient evidence for this.

Secondly, The diſorderly ſtate of the external world, and the imperfection of our bodies, with their tendency to corruption, do not permit, that happineſs ſhould much exceed miſery in the preſent life; and may be conſidered as the efficient inſtrumental cauſe of this. Bodily pain muſt in many caſes be impreſſed upon us by external objects; both this, and bodily pleaſure, lay the foundation for intellectual pains, and for irregular paſſions, which lead back again to pain, bodily and mental; our bodies muſt return to duſt, and every manifeſt approach thereto muſt be attended with ſuffering; and the unknown internal ſtructure of the brain, the great inſtrument of ſenſe and thought, is ſuch, as ſubjects us, from innumerable ſecret unavoidable cauſes, to paſs into the limits of pain. All which is only ſaying in other words, that we are fallen creatures.

Thirdly, In our preſent circumſtances, all other things remaining as they are, it is requiſite for us not to have any great over-balance of happineſs in this life; and this may be conſidered as the final cauſe.

For

For we may hope, by this perpetual mixture of miſery with our happineſs, to be the ſooner and the more perfectly freed from that ſelf-love, groſs or refined, which every kind and degree of happineſs, even the moſt ſpiritual, contributes to generate in us; and to make the greater progreſs in learning the virtues of benevolence, compaſſion, humility, fear of God, ſubmiſſion to his will, earneſt application to him, faith, hope, love towards him.

Fourthly, The whole tenor of the ſcriptures ſhews both in a direct and indirect way, that we ought not, cannot expect any great or laſting happineſs in this life.

We ought therefore, whenever falſe flattering hopes, with relation to our future condition in this life, riſe up to view in our imaginations, and tempt us, inſtantly to reject them; and, in the language of the ſcriptures, *to rejoice as though we rejoiced not*; to remember that we *are ſtrangers and pilgrims here*, that we only *dwell in tabernacles*, *have no continuing city*, but *expect one to come*, *the New Jeruſalem*, of which we are denizens, *where our treaſure and hearts ought to be*. The beſt and moſt religious perſons ought to expect, and even to deſire this *daily bread* of ſorrow and affliction, this *bleſſedneſs of thoſe that mourn*, and *to watch and pray* againſt the temptations of proſperity, leſt the day of death ſhould come upon them unawares, *as a thief in the night*, *while they are eating and drinking*, *marrying and giving in marriage*.

Cor. We might ſhew, by a like method of reaſoning, that if the miſery of this life ſhould, in certain caſes, outweigh the happineſs, it cannot, however, do this in any great degree. There muſt, from the nature of our frame and circumſtances here, be many intervals of eaſe, cheerfulneſs, and even poſitive pleaſure. Dejection and deſpondency are therefore as unſuitable to our preſent ſituation,

as

as a vain confidence, and fooliſh hope, of uninterrupted happineſs. We may learn alſo hence not to be terrified at any ſelf-denials or ſufferings for the ſake of religion, excluſively of thoſe arguments, which ſhew in a direct way, that religion promotes our preſent happineſs, as well as our future. Our very natures prevent the long continuance of exquiſite miſery. Miſery by continuance declines, and even paſſes into happineſs; and there muſt be, in every ſtate of long continuance, the frequent intervention of grateful ſenſations and ideas.

PROP. LXXIX.

Virtue has always the faireſt Proſpect, even in this Life; and Vice is always expoſed to the greateſt Hazards.

THIS has been the buſineſs of the laſt chapter to ſhew. But it is a truth, which is ſufficiently evident from common obſervation. Particular acts of virtue and vice often fail of their due reward and puniſhment, if we take in no more than a ſmall period of time after the act is performed. But then, if we take in the indefinite extent of this life, and eſtimate the natural expectations, it can ſcarce be doubted, but that every act of virtue is our greateſt wiſdom, even in reſpect of this world, every act of vice our greateſt folly. Now this general tendency of virtue and vice reſpectively may be conſidered as the principal evidence, which the light of nature, not ſubtilized or refined by deep ſpeculations, affords for the moral character of the Deity. The rewards which the courſe of nature beſtows upon virtue in general, and the fairneſs of the proſpect which it affords to the virtuous, ſhew that the virtuous are acceptable to the Deity; and we may conclude for like reaſons, that vice is odious in his ſight.

PROP.

PROP. LXXX.

It does not ſeem at all probable, that Happineſs is exactly proportioned to Virtue in the preſent Life.

For, Firſt, Thoſe who ſuffer martyrdom for the ſake of religion cannot be ſaid to receive any reward in this life for this their laſt and greateſt act of fidelity.

Secondly, Many good men are exerciſed with ſevere trials, purified thereby, and removed into another ſtate in the courſe of this purification, or ſoon after it. Diſeaſes which end in death, are a principal means of ſuch purifications.

Thirdly, There are frequent inſtances of perſons free indeed from groſs vices, but void of great virtues, who from a favourable conjuncture of circumſtances in this world, ſuch as we may ſuppoſe attended the rich man in the parable, *fare ſumptuouſly every day*, and live in a ſtate of comparative eaſe and pleaſure.

Fourthly, The ſame thing ſeems to hold in certain rare inſtances, even of very vicious perſons; and one might almoſt conjecture, that Providence expoſes ſome inſtances of this kind to view in a notorious manner, that the apparent inequality of its diſpenſations here, in a few caſes, and the argument for a future ſtate thence deducible, may make the greater impreſſion upon us.

The reader may obſerve, that this propoſition is not contrary to the foregoing; and that the foregoing muſt be eſtabliſhed previouſly, before we can draw an argument for a future ſtate from this, and the moral character of the Deity, put together.

It

It is to be obſerved alſo of the reaſoning made uſe of under all the four propoſitions of this ſection, that it is rather probable, and concluſive, in a general way only, than demonſtrative and preciſe. However, the probability and preciſion are as great as is neceſſary in practical matters. The practical inferences would remain the ſame, though theſe were leſs.

SECT.

SECT. II.

OF THE EXPECTATION OF BODIES POLITIC, THE JEWS IN PARTICULAR, AND THE WORLD IN GENERAL, DURING THE PRESENT STATE OF THE EARTH.

PROP. LXXXI.

It is probable, that all the preſent civil Governments will be overturned.

THIS may appear from the ſcripture prophecies, both in a direct way, *i. e.* from expreſs paſſages; ſuch as thoſe concerning the deſtruction of the image, and four beaſts, in *Daniel*; of Chriſt's *breaking all nations with a rod of iron, and daſhing them in pieces like a potter's veſſel*, &c. and from the ſupremacy and univerſal extent of the fifth monarchy, or kingdom of the ſaints, which is to be ſet up.

We may conclude the ſame thing alſo from the final reſtoration of the *Jews*, and the great glory and dominion promiſed to them, of which I ſhall ſpeak below.

And it adds ſome light and evidence to this, that all the known governments of the world have the evident principles of corruption in themſelves. They are compoſed of jarring elements, and ſubſiſt only by the alternate prevalence of theſe over each other. The ſplendour, luxury, ſelf-intereſt, martial glory, &c. which paſs for eſſentials in chriſtian governments, are totally oppoſite to the meek, humble, ſelf-denying ſpirit of chriſtianity; and whichſoever of theſe finally prevails over the other, the preſent form

form of the government muſt be diſſolved. Did true chriſtianity prevail throughout any kingdom entirely, the riches, ſtrength, glory, &c. of that kingdom would no longer be an object of attention to the governors or governed; they would become a nation of prieſts and apoſtles, and totally diſregard the things of this world. But this is not to be expected: I only mention it to ſet before the reader the natural conſequence of it. If, on the contrary, worldly wiſdom and infidelity prevail over chriſtianity, which ſeems to be the prediction of the ſcriptures, this worldly wiſdom will be found utter fooliſhneſs at laſt, even in reſpect of this world; the governments, which have thus loſt their cement, the ſenſe of duty, and the hopes and fears of a future life, will fall into anarchy and confuſion, and be entirely diſſolved. And all this may be applied, with a little change, to the *Mahometan* and *Heathen* governments. When chriſtianity comes to be propagated in the countries where theſe ſubſiſt, it will make ſo great a change in the face of affairs, as muſt ſhake the civil powers, which are here both externally and internally oppoſite to it; and the increaſe of wickedneſs, which is the natural and neceſſary conſequence of their oppoſition, will farther accelerate their ruin.

The diſſolution of ancient empires and republics may alſo prepare us for the expectation of a diſſolution of the preſent governments. But we muſt not carry the parallel too far here, and ſuppoſe that as new governments have ariſen out of the old ones, reſembling them in great meaſure, ſubſiſting for a certain time, and then giving place to other new ones, ſo it will be with the preſent governments. The prophecies do not admit of this; and it may be eaſily ſeen, that the ſituation of things in the great world is very different from what it has ever been before. Chriſtianity muſt now either be proved true, to the entire conviction of unbelievers; or, if it be an impoſture,

poſture, it will ſoon be detected. And whichſoever of theſe turns up, muſt make the greateſt change in the face of affairs. I ought rather to have ſaid, that the final prevalence and eſtabliſhment of chriſtianity, which, being true, cannot but finally prevail, and be eſtabliſhed, will do this. But it may perhaps be of ſome uſe juſt to put falſe ſuppoſitions.

How near the diſſolution of the preſent governments, generally or particularly, may be, would be great raſhneſs to affirm. Chriſt will come in this ſenſe alſo *as a thief in the night*. Our duty is therefore to watch, and to pray; to be faithful ſtewards; to give meat, and all other requiſites, in due ſeaſon, to thoſe under our care; and to endeavour by theſe, and all other lawful means, to preſerve the government, under whoſe protection we live, from diſſolution, ſeeking the peace of it, and ſubmitting to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake. No prayers, no endeavours of this kind, can fail of having ſome good effect, public or private, for the preſervation of ourſelves or others. The great diſpenſations of Providence are conducted by means that are either ſecret, or, if they appear, that are judged feeble or inefficacious. No man can tell, however private his ſtation may be, but his fervent prayer may avail to the ſalvation of much people. But it is more peculiarly the duty of magiſtrates thus to watch over their ſubjects, to pray for them, and to ſet about the reformation of all matters civil and eccleſiaſtical, to the utmoſt of their power. Good governors may promote the welfare and continuance of a ſtate, and wicked ones muſt accelerate its ruin. The ſacred hiſtory affords us inſtances of both kinds, and they are recorded there for the admonition of kings and princes in all future times.

It may not be amiſs here to note a few inſtances of the analogy between the body natural, with the happineſs of the individual to which it belongs, and the

the body politic, compoſed of many individuals, with its happineſs, or its flouriſhing ſtate in reſpect of arts, power, riches, &c. Thus all bodies politic ſeem, like the body natural, to tend to deſtruction and diſſolution, as is here affirmed, through vices public and private, and to be reſpited for certain intervals, by partial, imperfect reformations. There is no complete or continued ſeries of public happineſs on one hand, no utter miſery on the other; for the diſſolution of the body politic is to be conſidered as its death. It ſeems as romantic therefore for any one to project the ſcheme of a perfect government in this imperfect ſtate, as to be in purſuit of an univerſal remedy, a remedy which ſhould cure all diſtempers, and prolong human life beyond limit. And yet as temperance, labour, and medicines, in ſome caſes, are of great uſe in preſerving and reſtoring health, and prolonging life; ſo induſtry, juſtice, and all other virtues, public and private, have an analogous effect in reſpect of the body politic. As all the evils, which individuals ſuffer through the infirmity of the mortal body, and the diſorders of the external world, may, in general, contribute to increaſe their happineſs even in this life, and alſo are of great uſe to others; and as, upon the ſuppoſition of a future ſtate, death itſelf appears to have the ſame beneficial tendency in a more eminent degree than any other event in life, now conſidered as indefinitely prolonged; ſo the diſtreſſes of each body politic are of great uſe to this body itſelf, and alſo of great uſe to all neighbouring ſtates; and the diſſolutions of governments have much promoted the knowledge of true religion, and of uſeful arts and ſciences, all which ſeem, in due time and manner, intended to be entirely ſubſervient to true religion at laſt. And this affords great comfort to benevolent and religious perſons, when they conſider the hiſtories of former

times, or contemplate the probable conſequences of things in future generations.

PROP. LXXXII.

It is probable, that the preſent Forms of Church Government will be diſſolved.

THIS propoſition follows from the foregoing. The civil and eccleſiaſtical powers are ſo interwoven and cemented together, in all the countries of *chriſtendom*, that if the firſt fall, the laſt muſt fall alſo.

But there are many prophecies, which declare the fall of the eccleſiaſtical powers of the chriſtian world. And though each church ſeems to flatter itſelf with the hopes of being exempted; yet it is very plain, that the prophetical characters belong to all. They have all left the true, pure, ſimple religion; and teach for doctrines the commandments of men. They are all merchants of the earth, and have ſet up a kingdom of this world, abounding in riches, temporal power, and external pomp. They have all a dogmatizing ſpirit, and perſecute ſuch as do not receive their own mark, and worſhip the image which they have ſet up. They all neglect Chriſt's command of preaching the goſpel to all nations, and even that of going to *the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael*, there being innumerable multitudes in all chriſtian countries, who have never been taught to read, and who are, in other reſpects alſo, deſtitute of the means of ſaving knowledge. It is very true, that the church of *Rome* is *Babylon the great, and the mother of harlots, and of the abominations of the earth*. But all the reſt have copied her example, more or leſs. They have all received money, like *Gehazi*; and therefore the leproſy of *Naaman* will cleave to them, and to their ſeed for ever. And this impurity may be conſidered not only as juſtifying the application of the prophecies to all the chriſtian

chriſtian churches, but as a natural cauſe for their downfal. The corrupt governors of the ſeveral churches will ever oppoſe the true goſpel, and in ſo doing will bring ruin upon themſelves.

The deſtruction of the temple at *Jeruſalem*, and of the hierarchy of the *Jews*, may likewiſe be conſidered as a type and preſage of the deſtruction of that *Judaical* form of rites, ceremonies, and human ordinances, which takes place, more or leſs, in all chriſtian countries.

We ought, however, to remark here,

Firſt, That though the church of Chriſt has been corrupted thus in all ages and nations, yet there have been, and will be, in all, many who receive the ſeal of God, and worſhip him *in ſpirit, and in truth.* And of theſe as many have filled high ſtations, as low ones. Such perſons, though they have concurred in the ſupport of what is contrary to the pure religion, have, however, done it innocently, with reſpect to themſelves, being led thereto by invincible prejudices.

Secondly, Nevertheleſs, when it ſo happens, that perſons in high ſtations in the church have their eyes enlightened, and ſee the corruptions and deficiences of it, they muſt incur the prophetical cenſures in the higheſt degree, if they ſtill concur, nay, if they do not endeavour to reform and purge out theſe defilements. And though they cannot, according to this propoſition, expect entire ſucceſs; yet they may be bleſſed with ſuch a degree, as will abundantly compenſate their utmoſt endeavours, and rank them with the prophets and apoſtles.

Thirdly, As this corruption and degeneracy of the chriſtian church has proceeded from the fallen ſtate of mankind, and particularly of thoſe nations to whom the goſpel was firſt preached, and amongſt whom it has been ſince received; ſo it has, all other things being ſuppoſed to remain the ſame, ſuited our

circumſtances, in the beſt manner poſſible, and will continue to do ſo, as long as it ſubſiſts. God brings good out of evil, and draws men to himſelf in ſuch manner as their natures will admit of, by external pomp and power, by things not good in themſelves, and by ſome that are profane and unholy. He makes uſe of ſome of their corruptions, as means of purging away the reſt. The impurity of mankind is too groſs to unite at once with the ſtrict purity of the goſpel. The *Roman* empire firſt, and the *Goths* and *Vandals* afterwards, required, as one may ſay, ſome ſuperſtitions and idolatries to be mixed with the chriſtian religion; elſe they could not have been converted at all.

Fourthly, It follows from theſe conſiderations, that good men ought to ſubmit to the eccleſiaſtical *powers that be*, for conſcience ſake, as well as to the civil ones. They are both from God, as far as reſpects inferiors. Chriſt and his apoſtles obſerved the law, and walked orderly, though they declared the deſtruction of the temple, and the change of the cuſtoms eſtabliſhed by *Moſes*. Both the *Babylonians*, who deſtroyed *Jeruſalem* the firſt time, and the *Romans*, who did it the ſecond, were afterwards deſtroyed themſelves in the moſt exemplary manner. And it is probable, that thoſe who ſhall hereafter procure the downfal of the forms of church-government, will not do this from pure love, and chriſtian charity, but from the moſt corrupt motives, and by conſequence bring upon themſelves, in the end, the ſevereſt chaſtiſements. It is therefore the duty of all good chriſtians to obey both the civil and eccleſiaſtical powers under which they were born, *i. e.* provided diſobedience to God be not enjoined, which is ſeldom the caſe; to promote ſubjection and obedience in others; gently to reform and rectify, and to pray for the peace and proſperity of their own *Jeruſalem*.

PROP.

PROP. LXXXIII.

It is probable, that the Jews *will be reſtored to* Palæſtine.

THIS appears from the prophecies, which relate to the reſtoration of the *Jews* and *Iſraelites* to their own land. For,

Firſt, Theſe have never yet been fulfilled in any ſenſe agreeable to the greatneſs and glorioufneſs of them. The peace, power, and abundance of bleſſings, temporal and ſpiritual, promiſed to the *Jews* upon their return from captivity, were not beſtowed upon them in the interval between the reign of *Cyrus*, and the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by *Titus*; and ever ſince this deſtruction they have remained in a deſolate ſtate.

Secondly, The promiſes of reſtoration relate to the ten tribes, as well as the two of *Judah* and *Benjamin*. But the ten tribes, or *Iſraelites*, which were captivated by *Salmaneſer*, have never been reſtored at all. There remains therefore a reſtoration yet future for them.

Our ignorance of the place where they now lie hid, or fears that they are ſo mixed with other nations, as not to be diſtinguiſhed and ſeparated, ought not to be admitted as objections here. Like objections might be made to the reſurrection of the body; and the objections both to the one, and the other, are probably intended to be obviated by *Ezekiel*'s prophecy concerning the dry bones. It was one of the great ſins of the *Jews* to call God's promiſes in queſtion, on account of apparent difficulties and impoſſibilities; and the *Sadducees*, in particular, erred concerning the reſurrection, becauſe *they knew not the ſcriptures, nor the power of God*. However, it is our duty to inquire, whether the ten

tribes may not remain in the countries where they were firſt ſettled by *Salmaneſer*, or in ſome others.

Thirdly, A double return ſeems to be predicted in ſeveral prophecies.

Fourthly, The prophets who lived ſince the return from *Babylon*, have predicted a return in ſimilar terms with thoſe who went before. It follows therefore, that the predictions of both muſt relate to ſome reſtoration yet future.

Fifthly, The reſtoration of the *Jews* to their own land ſeems to be predicted in the New Teſtament.

To theſe arguments, drawn from prophecy, we may add ſome concurring evidences, which the preſent circumſtances of the *Jews* ſuggeſt.

Firſt, then, The *Jews* are yet a diſtinct people from all the nations amongſt which they reſide. They ſeem therefore reſerved by Providence for ſome ſuch ſignal favour, after they have ſuffered the due chaſtiſement.

Secondly, They are to be found in all the countries of the known world. And this agrees with many remarkable paſſages of the ſcriptures, which treat both of their diſperſion, and of their return.

Thirdly, They have no inheritance of land in any country. Their poſſeſſions are chiefly money and jewels. They may therefore transfer themſelves with the greater facility to *Paleſtine*.

Fourthly, They are treated with contempt and harſhneſs, and ſometimes with great cruelty, by the nations amongſt whom they ſojourn. They muſt therefore be the more ready to return to their own land.

Fifthly, They carry on a correſpondence with each other throughout the whole world; and conſequently muſt both know when circumſtances begin to favour their return, and be able to concert meaſures with one another concerning it.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, A great part of them ſpeak and write the *Rabbinical Hebrew*, as well as the language of the country where they reſide. They are therefore, as far as relates to themſelves, actually poſſeſſed of an univerſal language and character; which is a circumſtance that may facilitate their return beyond what can well be imagined.

Seventhly, The *Jews* themſelves ſtill retain a hope and expectation, that God will once more reſtore them to their own land.

Cor. 1. May not the two captivities of the *Jews*, and their two reſtorations, be types of the firſt and ſecond death, and of the firſt and ſecond reſurrections?

Cor. 2. Does it not appear agreeable to the whole analogy both of the word and works of God, that the *Jews* are types both of each individual in particular, on one hand, and of the whole world in general, on the other? May we not therefore hope, that, at leaſt after the ſecond death, there will be a reſurrection to life eternal to every man, and to the whole creation, which groans, and travails in pain together, waiting for the adoption, and glorious liberty, of the children of God?

Cor. 3. As the downfal of the *Jewiſh* ſtate under *Titus* was the occaſion of the publication of the goſpel to us Gentiles, ſo our downfal may contribute to the reſtoration of the *Jews*, and both together bring on the final publication and prevalence of the true religion; of which I ſhall treat in the next propoſition. Thus the type, and thing typified, will coincide; the firſt fruits, and the lump, be made holy together.

PROP. LXXXIV.

The Chriſtian Religion will be preached to, and received by, all Nations.

THIS appears from the expreſs declarations of Chriſt, and from many of his parables, alſo from the declarations and predictions of the apoſtles, and particularly from the *revelation*. There are likewiſe numberleſs prophecies in the Old Teſtament, which admit of no other ſenſe, when interpreted by the events which have ſince happened, the coming of Chriſt, and the propagation of his religion.

The truth of the chriſtian religion is an earneſt and preſage of the ſame thing, to all who receive it. For every truth of great importance muſt be diſcuſſed and prevail at laſt. The perſons who believe can ſee no reaſons for their own belief, but what muſt extend to all mankind by degrees, as the diffuſion of knowledge to all ranks and orders of men, to all nations, kindred, tongues, and people, cannot now be ſtopped, but proceeds ever with an accelerated velocity. And, agreeably to this, it appears that the number of thoſe who are able to give a reaſon for their faith increaſes every day.

But it may not be amiſs to ſet before the reader in one view ſome probable preſumptions for the univerſal publication and prevalence of the chriſtian religion, even in the way of natural cauſes.

Firſt, then, The great increaſe of knowledge, literary and philoſophical, which has been made in this and the two laſt centuries, and continues to be made, muſt contribute to promote every great truth, and particularly thoſe of revealed religion, as juſt now mentioned. The coincidence of the three remarkable events, of the reformation, the invention of printing, and the reſtoration of letters, with each other, in time, deſerves particular notice here.

Secondly,

Secondly, The commerce between the ſeveral nations of the world is enlarged perpetually more and more. And thus the children of this world are opening new ways of communication for future apoſtles to ſpread the glad tidings of ſalvation to the uttermoſt parts of the earth.

Thirdly, The apoſtaſy of nominal chriſtians, and objections of infidels, which are ſo remarkable in theſe days, not only give occaſion to ſearch out and publiſh new evidences for the truth of revealed religion, but alſo oblige thoſe who receive it, to purify it from errors and ſuperſtitions; by which means its progreſs amongſt the yet heathen nations will be much forwarded. Were we to propagate religion, as it is now held by the ſeveral churches, each perſon would propagate his own orthodoxy, lay needleſs impediments and ſtumbling blocks before his hearers, and occaſion endleſs feuds and diſſenſions amongſt the new converts. And it ſeems as if God did not intend that the general preaching of the goſpel ſhould be begun, till religion be diſcharged of its incumbrances and ſuperſtitions.

Fourthly, The various ſects which have ariſen amongſt chriſtians in late times, contribute both to purify religion, and alſo to ſet all the great truths of it in a full light, and to ſhew their practical importance.

Fifthly, The downfal of the civil and eccleſiaſtical powers, mentioned in the 81 and 82 propoſitions, muſt both be attended with ſuch public calamities, as will make men ſerious, and alſo drive them from the countries of *chriſtendom* into the remote parts of the world, particularly into the *Eaſt* and *Weſt Indies*; whither conſequently they will carry their religion now purified from errors and ſuperſtitions.

Sixthly, The reſtoration of the *Jews*, mentioned in the laſt propoſition, may be expected to have the greateſt effect in alarming mankind, and opening

their

their eyes. This will be ſuch an accompliſhment of the prophecies, as will vindicate them from all cavils. Beſides which, the careful ſurvey of *Palæſtine*, and the neighbouring countries, the ſtudy of the *Eaſtern* languages, of the hiſtories of the preſent and ancient inhabitants, &c. (which muſt follow this event) when compared together, will caſt the greateſt light upon the ſcriptures, and at once prove their genuineneſs, their truth, and their divine authority.

Seventhly, Mankind ſeem to have it in their power to obtain ſuch qualifications in a natural way, as, by being conferred upon the apoſtles in a ſupernatural one, were a principal means of their ſucceſs in the firſt propagation of the goſpel.

Thus, as the apoſtles had the power of healing miraculouſly, future miſſionaries may in a ſhort time accompliſh themſelves with the knowledge of all the chief practical rules of the art of medicine. This art is wonderfully ſimplified of late years, has received great additions, and is improving every day, both in ſimplicity and efficacy. And it may be hoped, that a few theoretical poſitions well aſcertained, with a moderate experience, may enable the young practitioner to proceed to a conſiderable variety of caſes with ſafety and ſucceſs.

Thus alſo, as the apoſtles had the power of ſpeaking various languages miraculouſly, it ſeems poſſible from the late improvements in grammar, logic, and the hiſtory of the human mind, for young perſons, by learning the names of viſible objects and actions in any unknown barbarous language, to improve and extend it immediately, and to preach to the natives in it.

The great extenſiveneſs of the *Rabbinical Hebrew*, and of *Arabic*, of *Greek* and *Latin*, of *Sclavonic* and *French*, and of many other languages, in their reſpective ways, alſo of the *Chineſe* character, ought to be taken into conſideration here.

And

And though we have not the gift of prophecy, yet that of the interpretation of prophecy ſeems to increaſe every day, by comparing the ſcriptures with themſelves, the prophecies with the events, and, in general, the word of God with his works.

To this we may add, that when preachers of the goſpel carry with them the uſeful manual arts, by which human life is rendered ſecure and comfortable, ſuch as the arts of building, tilling the ground, defending the body by ſuitable clothing, &c. it cannot but make them extremely acceptable to the barbarous nations; as the more refined arts and ſciences, mathematics, natural and experimental philoſophy, &c. will to the more civilized ones.

And it is an additional weight in favour of all this reaſoning, that the qualifications here conſidered may all be acquired in a natural way. For thus they admit of unlimited communication, improvement, and increaſe; whereas, when miraculous powers ceaſe, there is not only one of the evidences withdrawn, but a recommendation and means of admittance alſo.

However, far be it from us to determine by anticipation, what God may or may not do! The natural powers, which favour the execution of this great command of our Saviour's, to preach the goſpel to all nations, ought to be perpetual monitors to us to do ſo; and, as we now live in a more adult age of the world, more will now be expected from our natural powers. The *Jews* had ſome previous notices of Chriſt's firſt coming, and good perſons were thereby prepared to receive him; however, his appearance, and entire conduct, were very different from what they expected; ſo that they ſtood in need of the greateſt docility and humility, in order to become diſciples and apoſtles. And it is probable, that ſomething analogous to this will happen at Chriſt's ſecond coming. We may perhaps ſay, that

ſome

ſome glimmerings of the day begin already to ſhine in the hearts of all thoſe, who ſtudy and delight in the word and works of God.

PROP. LXXXV.

It is not probable, that there will be any pure or compleat Happineſs, before the Deſtruction of this World by Fire.

THAT the reſtoration of the *Jews*, and the univerſal eſtabliſhment of the true religion, will be the cauſes of great happineſs, and change the face of this world much for the better, may be inferred both from the prophecies, and from the nature of the thing. But ſtill, that the great crown of glory promiſed to chriſtians muſt be in a ſtate ulterior to this eſtabliſhment, appears for the following reaſons.

Firſt, From the expreſs declarations of the ſcriptures. Thus St. *Peter* ſays, that the earth muſt be burnt up, before we are to expect *a new heaven, and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs*; and St. *Paul*, that *fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*; the celeſtial, glorious body, made like unto that of Chriſt, at the reſurrection of the dead, being requiſite for this purpoſe.

Secondly, The preſent diſorderly ſtate of the natural world does not permit of unmixed happineſs; and it does not ſeem, that this can be rectified in any great degree, till the earth have received the baptiſm by fire.

But I preſume to affirm nothing particular in relation to future events. One may juſt aſk, whether Chriſt's reign of a thouſand years upon earth does not commence with the univerſal eſtabliſhment of chriſtianity; and whether the ſecond reſurrection, the

new

new heavens, and new earth, &c. do not coincide with the conflagration.

One ought alſo to add, with St. *Peter*, as the practical conſequence of this propoſition, that the diſſolution of this world by fire is the ſtrongeſt motive to an indifference to it, and to that holy converſation and godlineſs, which may fit us for *the new heavens, and new earth.*

SECT.

SECT. III.

OF A FUTURE STATE AFTER THE EXPIRATION OF THIS LIFE.

PROP. LXXXVI.

It is probable from the mere Light of Nature, that there will be a future State.

I DO not here mean, that mankind in ancient times did diſcover a future ſtate, and reaſon themſelves into it. This, I apprehend, is contrary to the fact, a future ſtate having been taught all mankind by patriarchal revelations before or after the flood. Nor do I mean, that men could have done this without any aſſiſtance, primarily or ſecondarily, from revelation, and by mere unaſſiſted reaſon. This is a problem of too deep a nature to be determined concluſively; or, if it can, we ſhall determine for the oppoſite ſide, as it ſeems to me, as ſoon as our knowledge of the powers of the human mind is arrived at a ſufficient height. My deſign is only to ſhew, that the works of God are ſo far opened to us in the preſent age, that, when the queſtion concerning a future ſtate is put, we ought to determine for the affirmative, though the authority of his word be not taken into conſideration. Here then I obſerve,

Firſt, That it is not poſſible to produce any evidence againſt a future ſtate; ſo that the probability for it muſt at leaſt be equal to that againſt it, *i. e.* to the fraction $\frac{1}{2}$, if we ſpeak according to the preciſe language uſed in the doctrine of chances. We are apt indeed to conclude, that, becauſe what we ſee *is*, ſo what we ſee not, *is not*; and conſequently that there

there is no future ſtate, *i. e.* we make our ignorance of the means by which our exiſtence is preſerved after death, and of the manner in which we are to exiſt, an argument againſt it. But this is utterly inconcluſive. Our ignorance is a nothing, and therefore can be no foundation to go upon; and we have every day inſtances of the miſtakes which reaſoning from it would lead us into. If there be really a future ſtate, it ſeems very poſſible, that its connection with other realities in this ſtate may afford preſumptions for it; and that it does ſo, I ſhall ſhew in the paragraphs that follow: but, if there be no future ſtate, this non-entity cannot have any properties or connections, upon which to erect an argument for it. We muſt therefore, previouſly to all probable arguments for a future ſtate, own that we are ignorant whence we came, and whither we go; and that our not being able to penetrate into the dark regions beyond death, were that abſolutely the caſe, would not be an evidence, that there is nothing in thoſe regions. That we can both penetrate thither, and diſcover ſomething in theſe regions, is my next buſineſs to ſhew. For,

Secondly, The ſubtle nature of ſenſation, thought, and motion, affords ſome poſitive preſumptions for a future ſtate. The connection of theſe with matter, and their dependence on it, are perhaps more fully ſeen in the foregoing account of vibrations and aſſociation, than in any other ſyſtem that has yet been produced. However, there remains one chaſm ſtill, viz. that between ſenſation, and the material organs, which this theory does not attempt to fill up. An immaterial ſubſtance may be required for the ſimpleſt ſenſation; and, if ſo, ſince it does not appear how this ſubſtance can be affected by the diſſolution of the groſs body at death, it remains probable, that it will ſubſiſt after death, *i. e.* that there will be a future ſtate.

Or

Or if we take the ſyſtem of the materialiſts, and ſuppoſe matter capable of ſenſation, and conſequently of intellect, ratiocination, affection, and the voluntary power of motion, we muſt, however, ſuppoſe an elementary infiniteſimal body in the embryo, capable of vegetating *in utero*, and of receiving and retaining ſuch a variety of impreſſions of the external world, as correſponds to all the variety of our ſenſations, thoughts, and motions; and, when the ſmallneſs and wonderful powers of this elementary body are conſidered in this view, it ſeems to me, that the depoſition of the groſs cruſt at death, which was merely inſtrumental during the whole courſe of life, is to be looked upon as having no more power to deſtroy it, than the accretion of this cruſt had a ſhare in its original exiſtence, and wonderful powers; but on the contrary, that the elementary body will ſtill ſubſiſt, retain its power of vegetating again, and, when it does this, ſhew what changes have been made in it by the impreſſions of external objects here; *i. e.* receive according to the deeds done in the *groſs* body, and reap as it has ſowed.

Or, if theſe ſpeculations be thought too refined, we may, however, from the evident inſtrumentality of the muſcles, membranes, bones, &c. to the nervous ſyſtem, and of one part of this to another, compared with the ſubtle nature of the principle of ſenſation, thought, and motion, infer in an obvious and popular, but probable way, that this principle only loſes its preſent inſtrument of action by death. And the reſtitution of our mental and voluntary powers, after their ceſſation or derangement by ſleep, apoplexies, maniacal and other diſorders, prepares for the more eaſy conception of the poſſibility and probability of the ſame thing after death. As therefore, before we enter upon any diſquiſitions of this kind, the probability for a future ſtate is juſt equal to that againſt it, *i. e.* each equal to the

fraction

fraction $\frac{1}{2}$; ſo it ſeems, that the firſt ſtep we take, though it be through regions very faintly illuminated, does, however, turn the ſcale, in ſome meaſure, in favour of a future ſtate; and that, whether the principle of thought and action within us be conſidered in the moſt philoſophical light to which we can attain, or in an obvious and popular one.

Thirdly, The changes of ſome animals into a different form, after an apparent death, ſeem to be a ſtrong argument of the forementioned power of elementary animal bodies; as the growth of vegetables from ſeeds apparently putrefied is of a like power in elementary vegetable bodies. And all theſe phænomena, with the renewals of the face of nature, awaking from ſleep, recovery from diſeaſes, &c. ſeem in the vulgar, moſt obvious, and moſt natural way of conſidering theſe things, to be hints and preſumptions of a life after the extinction of this.

Fourthly, The great deſire of a future life, with the horror of annihilation, which are obſervable in a great part of mankind, are preſumptions for a future life, and againſt annihilation. All other appetites and inclinations have adequate objects prepared for them, it cannot therefore be ſuppoſed, that this ſum total of them all ſhould go ungratified. And this argument will hold, in ſome meaſure, from the mere analogy of nature, though we ſhould not have recourſe to the moral attributes of God; but it receives great additional force from conſidering him as our father and protector.

If it be ſaid, that this deſire is factitious, and the neceſſary effect of ſelf-love; I anſwer, that all our other deſires are factitious, and deducible from ſelf-love, alſo; and that many of thoſe which are gratified proceed from a ſelf-love of a groſſer kind. Beſides, ſelf-love is only to be deſtroyed by, and for the ſake of, the love of God, and of our neighbour. Now the ultimate prevalency of theſe is a ſtill

ſtronger argument for a future life, in which we may firſt love God, and then our neighbour in and through him.

Fifthly, The pain which attends the child during its birth or paſſage into this world, the ſeparation and death of the *placenta*, by which the child received its nouriſhment *in utero*, with other circumſtances, reſemble what happens at death. Since therefore the child, by means of its birth, enters upon a new ſcene, has new ſenſes, and, by degrees, intellectual powers of perception, conferred upon it, why may not ſomething analogous to this happen at death? Our ignorance of the manner, in which this is to be effected, is certainly no preſumption againſt it; as all who are aware of the great ignorance of man, will readily allow. Could any being of equal underſtanding with man, but ignorant of what happens upon birth, judge beforehand that birth was an introduction to a new life, unleſs he was previouſly informed of the ſuitableneſs of the bodily organs to the external world? Would he not rather conclude, that the child muſt immediately expire upon ſo great a change, upon wanting ſo many things neceſſary to his ſubſiſtence, and being expoſed to ſo many hazards and impreſſions apparently unſuitable? And would not the cries of the child confirm him in all this? And thus we may conclude, that our birth was even intended to intimate to us a future life, as well as to introduce us into the preſent.

Sixthly, It would be very diſſimilar to the other events of life, that death ſhould be the laſt; that the ſcene ſhould conclude with ſuffering. This can ſcarce be reconciled to the beauty and harmony of the viſible world, and to the general prepollency of pleaſure over pain, and ſubſerviency of pain to pleaſure, before-mentioned. All the evils of life, of which we are judges, contribute ſome way to improve and perfect us. Shall therefore the laſt which we

ſee,

ſee, and the greateſt in our apprehenſions, quite extinguiſh our exiſtence? Is it not much more likely, that it will perfect all ſuch as are far advanced, and be a ſuitable correction and preparatory to the reſt? Upon ſuppoſition of a future eternal life, in which our happineſs is to ariſe from the previous annihilation of ourſelves, and from the pure love of God, and of our neighbour, it is eaſy to ſee how death may contribute more to our perfection, than any other event of our lives; and this will make it quite analogous to all the others. But that our lives ſhould conclude with a bitter morſel, is ſuch a ſuppoſition, as can hardly conſiſt with the benevolence of the Deity, in the moſt limited ſenſe, in which this attribute can be aſcribed to him.

Seventhly, All that great *apparatus* for carrying us from body to mind, and from ſelf-love to the pure love of God, which the doctrine of aſſociation opens to view, is an argument that theſe great ends will at laſt be attained; and that all the imperfect individuals, who have left this ſchool of benevolence and piety at different periods, will again appear on the ſtage of a life analogous to this, though greatly different in particular things, in order to reſume and complete their ſeveral remaining taſks, and to be made happy thereby. If we reaſon upon the deſigns of Providence in the moſt pure and perfect manner, of which our faculties are capable, *i. e.* according to the moſt philoſophical analogy, we ſhall be unavoidably led to this concluſion. There are the moſt evident marks of deſign in this *apparatus*, and of power and knowledge without limits every where. What then can hinder the full accompliſhment of the purpoſe deſigned? The conſideration of God's infinite benevolence, compared with the proſpect of happineſs to reſult to his creatures from this deſign, adds great ſtrength to the argument.

Eighthly, Virtue is, in general, rewarded here, and has the marks of the divine approbation; vice, the contrary. And yet, as far as we can judge, this does not always happen; nay, it ſeems to happen very ſeldom, that a good man is rewarded here in any exact proportion to his merit, or a vicious man puniſhed exactly according to his demerit. Now theſe apparent inequalities in the diſpenſations of providence, in ſubordinate particulars, are the ſtrongeſt argument for a future ſtate, in which God may ſhew his perfect juſtice and equity, and the conſiſtency of all his conduct with itſelf. To ſuppoſe virtue in general to be in a ſuffering ſtate, and vice in a triumphant one, is not only contrary to obvious facts, but would alſo, as it appears to me, deſtroy all our reaſoning upon the divine conduct. But if the contrary be laid down as the general rule, which is ſurely the language of ſcripture, as well as of reaſon, then the exceptions to this rule, which again both ſcripture and reaſon atteſt, are irreſragable evidences for a future ſtate, in which things will be reduced to a perfect uniformity. Now, if but ſo much as one eminently good or eminently wicked perſon can be proved to ſurvive after the paſſage through the gulph of death, all the reſt muſt be ſuppoſed to ſurvive alſo from natural analogy. The caſe of martyrs for religion, natural or revealed, deſerves a particular conſideration here. They cannot be ſaid to receive any reward for that [illegible] and greateſt act of obedience.

Ninthly, The voice of conſcience within a man, accuſing or excuſing him, from whatever cauſe it proceed, ſupernatural impreſſion, natural inſtinct, acquired aſſociations, &c. is a preſumption, that we ſhall be called hereafter to a tribunal; and that this voice of conſcience is intended to guard and direct us how to prepare ourſelves for a trial at

at that tribunal. This, again, is an argument, which analogy teaches us to draw from the relation in which we ſtand to God, compared with earthly relations. And it is a farther evidence of the juſtneſs of this argument, that all mankind in all ages ſeem to have been ſenſible of the force of it.

Tenthly, The general belief of a future ſtate, which has prevailed in all ages and nations, is an argument of the reality of this future ſtate. And this will appear, whether we conſider the efficient or the final cauſe of this general belief. If it aroſe from patriarchal revelations, it confirms the ſcriptures, and conſequently eſtabliſhes itſelf in the manner to be explained under the next propoſition. If it aroſe from the common parents of mankind after the flood, it appears at leaſt to have been an antediluvian tradition. If mankind were led into it by ſome ſuch reaſons and analogies as the foregoing, its being general is a preſumption of the juſtneſs of theſe reaſons. The truth of the caſe appears to be, that all theſe things, and probably ſome others, concurred (amongſt the reſt, apparitions of the dead, or the belief of theſe, dreams of apparitions, and the ſeeming paſſage to and from another world during ſleep, the body being alſo, as it were, dead at the ſame time); and that, as the other parts of the ſimple, pure, patriarchal religion degenerated into ſuperſtition and idolatry, ſo the doctrine of a future ſtate was adulterated with fictions and fables, as we find it among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, and other pagan nations.

As to the *Jews*, their high opinion of themſelves on account of the covenant made with their father *Abraham*, and repeated at *Sinai*, which in its firſt and literal ſenſe was merely temporal, contributed probably to make the more groſs and carnal amongſt them overlook the doctrine of a future ſtate, as at

teſted either by reaſon or tradition. But when their captivity, by *Nebuchadnezzar*, and other calamities, rendered this world contemptible and bitter to them, many, as the *Phariſees* and *Eſſenes*, had recourſe in earneſt to this great ſource of comfort; whilſt others, adhering ſervilely to the letter of the law, expected only temporal proſperity, under a victorious *Meſſiah*. However, it is not to be doubted, but that, before this, good *Jews*, particularly ſuch as did, or were ready to lay down their lives for the ſake of religion, had the ſupport of this belief; and it appears to me, that there are many things in the Old Teſtament, which both ſhew, that the doctrine of a future ſtate was the current opinion among the *Jews*; and alſo that it was attended with far leſs expectations, than amongſt chriſtians; whence it might eaſily be overlooked and neglected by carnal minds, as above noted. Their hearts were ſet upon temporal proſperity, for themſelves conſidered ſeparately, for their nation, for their poſterity: all which we muſt, however, ſuppoſe to be more ſuitable to their other circumſtances, and to thoſe of the world in general, when the whole of things is taken into conſideration, than if they had had more full and magnificent expectations after death.

As to the final cauſes of the belief of a future ſtate amongſt mankind, if we ſuppoſe, that theſe are either the better regulation of ſtates, and the public happineſs, or the private happineſs of each individual, they would be ſtrong arguments for the divine benevolence, and conſequently for a future ſtate; even though it be ſuppoſed, that the efficient cauſe was only the invention of thoſe men, who ſaw that this doctrine would be uſeful publicly and privately. For God muſt, at leaſt, have permitted this; according to the doctrine of theſe papers, muſt have cauſed it.

But,

But, without entering into this examination of the efficient or final cauſes, we may affirm, that the mere general prevalence of the doctrine of a future ſtate is of itſelf a ſtrong preſumption of its truth. If it be true, it is natural, *i. e.* analogous to other things, to ſuppoſe that we ſhould have ſome general expectation of it, juſt as in other caſes, where we are nearly concerned; alſo that as mankind advance in knowledge and ſpirituality by the advanced age of the world, this doctrine ſhould be more and more opened to them. Now this is the fact; the doctrine of a future ſtate has, from the firſt memory of things in the poſtdiluvian world, been thus perpetually opened more and more. Therefore, *e converſo*, it is probable, that the doctrine itſelf is true.

It may be objected to ſome of the arguments here alleged for a future ſtate, that they are applicable to brutes; and therefore that they prove too much. To this we may anſwer, that the future exiſtence of brutes cannot be diſproved by any arguments, as far as yet appears: let therefore thoſe which favour it be allowed their due weight, and only that. There are, beſides thoſe common to all animals, many which are peculiar to man, and thoſe very forcible ones. We have therefore much ſtronger evidence for our own future exiſtence than for that of brutes; which, again, is a thing very analogous to our circumſtances. It is ſomething more than mere curioſity, that makes benevolent perſons concerned for the future welfare of the brute creation; and yet they have ſo much to do nearer home, for themſelves, and their relatives, by way of preparation for a future ſtate, that it would be a great miſuſe of time to dwell upon ſuch foreign ſpeculations.

The doctrine of tranſmigration may be conſidered as an argument for the future exiſtence of all animals in one view; though a moſt pernicious

corruption of the practical doctrine of a future ſtate in another.

It may farther be objected to ſome part of the foregoing reaſoning, that the deſtruction of vegetables in ſo many various ways, that few, relatively ſpeaking, come to perfection, with the many irregularities of the natural world, ſhews that God does not, in fact, bring all his works to perfection. I anſwer, that if vegetable life be not attended with ſenſation (and we do not at all know, that it is), this, with infinite other phænomena of a like kind, may be no irregularity at all. The inanimate world may, according to the preſent conſtitution of things, however irregular that may ſeem to us, ſerve, in the beſt poſſible manner, to promote the happineſs of the animate. We are apt to eſtimate maturity in natural productions according to very narrow relative conſiderations. But, in truth, that herb or fruit is mature, which has anſwered its end in reſpect of animal life, the ſupport, for inſtance, of a peculiar ſet of inſects; and, if the particles of inanimate matter thus paſs through the bodies of vegetables and animals in an endleſs revolution, they may perform all the offices intended by God: or he may have fitted them for infinite other uſes and offices, of which we know nothing.

But if vegetables have ſenſation, which may indeed be a ſpeculation very foreign to us, but is what we cannot diſprove, then vegetables may be provided for in the ſame manner as animals. Or, if we ſuppoſe the argument to fail here, ſtill animals, *i. e.* thoſe allowed by all to be ſo, may live hereafter, though no vegetables do identically, and few according to the ordinary courſe of propagation by their ſeeds or ſhoots: or the argument may fail in reſpect of brute animals, and extend to man alone.

PROP.

PROP. LXXXVII.

The Chriſtian Revelation gives us an abſolute Aſſurance of a future State.

THAT the reader may ſee more fully the degree of evidence afforded by the ſcriptures to this moſt important doctrine, I will here make the following obſervations.

Firſt, then, A future ſtate is the plain and expreſs doctrine of the New Teſtament, in the obvious and literal ſenſe of the words. It reſts therefore upon the authority of the revelation itſelf. Hence all the miracles of Chriſt and his apoſtles, and, by conſequence, of *Moſes* and the prophets, all the prophecies of the ſcriptures, whoſe accompliſhment is already paſt, and viſible to us, become pledges and atteſtations of the truth of this doctrine. We cannot ſuppoſe, that God would have given ſuch powers and evidences, as muſt neceſſarily propagate and eſtabliſh this doctrine, was it not true. For this is the grand, and, as we may ſay, the only doctrine of the New Teſtament, and even of the Old, when interpreted by the New, as it ought to be.

And, as this is the moſt convincing evidence even to philoſophical perſons, ſo it is almoſt the only one which can affect and ſatisfy the vulgar. But indeed what reſource can any man have in things above his capacity, beſides reſting on thoſe who have evidently more power, knowledge, and goodneſs, than himſelf, who have worked miracles, foretold things to come, preached and practiſed righteouſneſs?

All the miracles of both the Old and New Teſtament were performed by Chriſt in effect, *i. e.* by his power and authority. He therefore muſt be able to

to preſerve us from periſhing utterly; and the predictions of future ſtates in this world, which God gave to him, and he to his ſervant *John* and others, both before and after his coming, ſhew by their accompliſhment, that all his other predictions, and eſpecially the great one of a reſurrection to life eternal, will alſo be accompliſhed in due time.

Secondly, The perſons brought back to life again in the Old and New Teſtaments, and, above all, the reſurrection of Chriſt himſelf, have a great tendency to ſtrengthen the foregoing argument, and to remove all our doubts, fears, and jealouſies, concerning the reality of a future ſtate. The ſame may be ſaid of the hiſtories of *Enoch* and *Elijah*, and of the appearance of *Moſes* and *Elijah* at Chriſt's transfiguration. As there are no footſteps back again from the grave to life, our imagination ſtaggers, and our faith ſtands in need of a ſenſible, as well as a rational ſupport.

Thirdly, The great readineſs of the prophets and apoſtles, and of other good *Jews* and *Chriſtians* after their example, to ſuffer death for the ſake of their religion, is a ſingular comfort and encouragement to us. We are ſure from hence, that they believed a future ſtate themſelves; and they could not but know whether or no they had the power of working miracles, had ſeen Chriſt after his death, had received divine communications, &c. They muſt therefore have been poſſeſſed of theſe undeniable evidences for a future ſtate; they could neither be deceived themſelves in this matter, nor deceive others.

Fourthly, The whole hiſtory and inſtitutions of the *Jewiſh* people, when interpreted by chriſtianity, are types and prophecies of a future ſtate. And here the Old and New Teſtaments confirm and illuſtrate each other in the ſtrongeſt manner: and the Old Teſtament, when interpreted by the New, becomes

becomes entirely ſpiritual, and equally expreſſive, with the New, of the doctrine of a future ſtate. It may be obſerved of the *Pſalms* particularly, that the ſpiritual interpretation is to us, in the preſent times, more eaſy and natural upon the whole, than the literal and temporal one.

Fifthly, If we compare what was advanced above, concerning the elementary infinitefimal body, with the ſcripture doctrine of the reſurrection of the body, and particularly with St. *Paul's* account of it, 1 *Cor.* xv. there will appear ſuch a harmony and coincidence between the evidences from reaſon and thoſe from ſcripture, as will greatly confirm both.

PROP. LXXXVIII.

The Rewards and Puniſhments of a future Life will far exceed the Happineſs and Miſery of this, both in Degree and Duration.

Here I will firſt conſider the ſuggeſtions of the light of reaſon; ſecondly, the declarations of the ſcriptures.

Firſt, then, As man appears, according to the light of reaſon, to be in a progreſſive ſtate, it may be conjectured, or even preſumed, that the rewards and puniſhments of a future life will exceed that happineſs, and miſery, which are here the natural conſequences of virtue and vice. However, the light of reaſon is not clear and certain in this point: neither can it determine, whether the happineſs and miſery of the next life will be pure and unmixed, or no. It may indeed ſhew, that each man will receive according to his deſerts; but then, ſince there is no pure virtue or vice here, ſince alſo there may be room for both virtue and vice hereafter, the rewards and puniſhments of the next life may ſucceed each other at ſhort intervals, as in the preſent: or, if we adopt the

the mechanical ſyſtem throughout, then we can only hope and preſume, that God will ultimately make the happineſs of each individual to outweigh his miſery, finitely or infinitely; and ſhall be entirely uncertain, whether or no, at the expiration of this life, we ſhall paſs into another, in like manner, chequered with happineſs and miſery: and thus one of the principal motives to virtue and piety would be loſt.

It is true indeed, that the heathens had their *Elyſium* and *Tartarus*; but then theſe doctrines were probably the corrupted remains of ſome traditionary revelation; and ſo contribute to ſtrengthen the real doctrine of the Scriptures on this head, which I am to ſet forth in the next place.

The ſcriptures then repreſent the ſtate of the good hereafter, as attended with the pureſt and greateſt happineſs; and that of the wicked as being exquiſitely and eternally miſerable. And though the words tranſlated *eternal* and *for ever*, in the Old and New Teſtaments, do not ſeem to ſtand for an abſolute metaphyſical infinity of duration, as we now term it, yet they certainly import a duration of a great relative length, and may import any long period of time, ſhort of an abſolute eternity. The ſcriptures therefore, in their declarations concerning the degree and duration of future rewards and puniſhments, lay before us the ſtrongeſt motives to obedience; ſuch as, if duly conſidered, would rouſe and alarm our hopes and fears, and all our faculties, to the utmoſt; excite to the moſt earneſt prayers; and mortify inſtantly to the things of this world.

Now, though reaſon cannot diſcover this to us, or determine it abſolutely, as juſt now remarked; yet it approves it, when diſcovered and determined previouſly. At leaſt, it approves of the pure and indefinite happineſs of the good, and acquieſces in the indefinite puniſhment of the wicked. For we always

ſeem ready to expect a ſtate of pure holineſs and happineſs from the infinite perfection of the Deity; and yet the preſent mixture of happineſs with miſery, and of virtue with vice, alſo any future degree of vice and miſery, may be reconciled to infinite perfection and benevolence, upon ſuppoſition that they be finally overpowered by their oppoſites: or, if we conſult the dictates of the moral ſenſe alone, without entering into the hypotheſis of mechaniſm, the pure miſery of the wicked, under certain limitations as to degree and duration, may be reconciled to the mercy of God, and will be required by his juſtice. But the moral ſenſe was certainly intended to warn us concerning futurity.

It will not be improper here to remark, that the ſcriptures favour our firſt notions concerning pure virtue and happineſs, by the mention of a paradiſiacal ſtate, as the original one, in which man was placed; and by repreſenting our future happineſs, as a reſtoration to this ſtate. They take notice therefore of that greateſt of all difficulties, the introduction of evil into the works of an infinitely benevolent Being; and by aſcribing it to ſin, the thing which is moſt oppoſite to God, raiſe an expectation, that it muſt be entirely overcome at laſt.

PROP. LXXXIX.

It is probable, that the future Happineſs of the Good will be of a ſpiritual Nature; but the future Miſery of the Wicked may be both corporeal and mental.

THESE are points in which the ſcriptures have not been explicit. It is therefore our duty to beware of vain curioſity, and to arm ourſelves with a deep humility. We are not judges, what degree of knowledge is moſt ſuited to our condition. That there will

will be a future ſtate at all, has not been diſcovered, with certainty, to a great part of mankind; and we may obſerve in general, that God conceals from us all particular things of a diſtant nature, and only gives us general notices of thoſe that are near; and ſometimes not even ſo much as this, where a peculiar duty, or deſign of providence, requires otherwiſe. However, as we are obliged to read and meditate upon the ſcriptures, to examine our own natures, and to compare them with the ſcriptures, we ſeem authorized to make ſome inquiry into this high and intereſting point.

Now it appears from the foregoing theory, as well as from other methods of reaſoning, that the love of God, and of his creatures, is the only point, in which man can reſt; and that the firſt, being generated by means of the laſt, does afterwards purify, exalt, and comprehend it. In like manner, the ſcriptures place our ultimate happineſs in ſinging praiſes to God, and the Lamb; in becoming one with God, and members of Chriſt, and of each other; which phraſes have a remarkable agreement with the foregoing deductions from reaſon: and we ſeem authorized to conclude from both together, that the future happineſs of the bleſſed will conſiſt in contemplating, adoring, and loving God; in obeying his commands; and, by ſo doing, miniſtering to the happineſs of others; rejoicing in it, and being partakers of it.

It ſeems probable alſo, both from ſome paſſages of the ſcriptures, and from the analogy of our natures, that our attachments to dear friends and relations, for whom we are *not to ſorrow as they that have no hope*, and our eſteem and affection for eminently pious perſons in former ages, for *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and *the ſpirits of* other *juſt men made perfect*, will ſtill ſubſiſt on our arrival at the true *mount Sion*, and *the heavenly Jeruſalem*.

It

It may be conjectured farther, that the glorified body will not be capable of pleaſures that may be called corporeal, in the ſame ſenſe as the preſent bodily pleaſures are; but only ſerve as the eye and ear do to ſpiritual religious perſons, *i. e.* be a mere inſtrument and inlet to the refined pleaſures of benevolence and piety.

Is it not probable, that this earth, air, &c. will continue to be the habitations of the bleſſed? It ſeems to me, that a very wonderful agreement between philoſophical diſcoveries, and the ſcriptures, will appear hereafter. Some inſtances, and many hints, of this agreement may be ſeen in Mr. *Whiſton*'s works. Only let us always remember, that we muſt think and ſpeak upon the things of another world, much more imperfectly than children do concerning the pleaſures, privileges, and occupations of manhood.

With reſpect to the puniſhments of the wicked in a future ſtate, we may obſerve, that theſe may be corporeal, though the happineſs of the bleſſed ſhould not be ſo. For ſenſuality is one great part of vice, and a principal ſource of it. It may be neceſſary therefore, that actual fire ſhould feed upon the elementary body, and whatever elſe is added to it after the reſurrection, in order to burn out the ſtains of ſin. The elementary body may alſo perhaps bear the action of fire for ages, without being deſtroyed, like the *caput mortuum* or *terra damnata*, of the chemiſts. For this *terra damnata* remains after the calcination of vegetable and animal ſubſtances by intenſe and long continued fires. The deſtruction of this world by fire, ſpoken of both in the ſcriptures, and in many profane writings, the phænomena of comets, and of the ſun and fixed ſtars, thoſe vaſt bodies of fire, which burn for ages, the great quantity of ſulphureous matter contained in the bowels of the earth, the deſtruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* by fire and brimſtone, alluded to in the New Teſtament,

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the repreſentation of future puniſhment under the emblem of the fire of *Gehenna*, and, above all, the expreſs paſſages of ſcripture, in which it is declared, that the wicked ſhall be puniſhed by fire, even everlaſting fire, confirm this poſition concerning the corporeal nature of future puniſhment, as well as give light to one another.

The ſame conſiderations confirm the long duration of future puniſhment. For if the earth be ſuppoſed to be ſet on fire, either by the near approach of a comet, or by ſome general fermentation in its own bowels, juſt as the deluge was cauſed partly by waters from the heavens, partly by thoſe of the great deep, it may burn for many revolutions, either in a planetary or a cometary orbit; and theſe may be the *ages of ages*, ſpoken of in the *Apocalypſe*. Farther, if the duration of Chriſt's reign upon earth for a thouſand years be eſtimated, as interpreters have with apparent reaſon eſtimated other durations in the prophetical writings, by putting a day for a year, then will this reign continue for 360,000 years. And ſince it appears to be previous to the puniſhment in the lake of fire, and limited, whereas that puniſhment is to endure *for ages of ages*, that is, for an indefinitely long period of time, one may perhaps conjecture, that this puniſhment is to be of longer duration than the reign of Chriſt upon earth for 360,000 years. But theſe things are mere conjectures. God has not been pleaſed to diſcover the kind, degree, or duration of future puniſhment in explicit terms. However, the ſacred writings concur every where with the voice of reaſon in alarming us to the utmoſt extent of our faculties, leſt we come into that place of torment. The puniſhments threatened to the body politic of the *Jews* have fallen upon it in the heavieſt and moſt exemplary manner. The *Jews*, conſidered as a body politic, have now been in a ſtate of ſuffering, without any interval

of

of relaxation, for almoſt ſeventeen hundred years; during which time they have been like *Cain* the elder brother, who ſlew *Abel*, becauſe he was more righteous than himſelf, and his ſacrifice more acceptable than his own, fugitives and vagabonds over the face of the earth: they have been perſecuted and ſlain every where, having the indelible mark of circumciſion ſet upon them, to which they ſtill adhere moſt tenaciouſly, and which has been a principal means of preventing their apoſtatizing from their own religion, after they grow up to adult age. And this may ſerve as a type and evidence of the certainty and greatneſs of future puniſhment, ſhewing that it will be greater, and more laſting, than human foreſight could poſſibly have conjectured; juſt as their final reſtoration ſeems to preſage the final redemption and ſalvation of the moſt wicked. And therefore, according to that earneſt and affectionate admonition of our Saviour, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

But if the puniſhments of another world ſhould be corporeal in ſome meaſure, there is ſtill the greateſt reaſon to believe, that they will be ſpiritual alſo; and that by ſelfiſhneſs, ambition, malevolence, envy, revenge, cruelty, profaneneſs, murmuring againſt God, infidelity, and blaſphemy, men will become tormentors to themſelves, and to each other; deceive, and be deceived; infatuate, and be infatuated; ſo as not to be able to repent, and turn to God, till the appointed time comes, if that ſhould ever be.

But we are not to ſuppoſe, that the degree, probably not the duration of future puniſhment, corporeal or mental, will be the ſame to all. It may alſo perhaps be, that there may be ſome alleviating circumſtances, or even ſome admixture of happineſs. Only the ſcriptures do not authorize any ſuch conjectures; and therefore we ought to proceed with the utmoſt caution, leſt we lead ourſelves or others into a fatal miſtake. And indeed, if the happineſs of

the bleſſed be pure and unmixed, as the ſcriptures ſeem to declare, and reaſon to hope, then may the miſery of the wicked be unmixed alſo. Nevertheleſs, ſince the goodneſs of God has no oppoſite, analogy does not here require that concluſion.

PROP. XC.

It ſeems probable, that the Soul will remain in a State of Inactivity, though perhaps not of Inſenſibility, from Death to the Reſurrection.

Some religious perſons ſeem to fear, leſt by allowing a ſtate of inſenſibility to ſucceed immediately after death, for ſome hundreds, or perhaps thouſands of years, the hopes and fears of another world ſhould be leſſened. But we may affirm, on the contrary, that they would be increaſed thereby. For time, being a relative thing, ceaſes in reſpect of the ſoul, when it ceaſes to think. If therefore we admit of a ſtate of inſenſibility between death and the reſurrection, theſe two great events will fall upon two contiguous moments of time, and every man enter directly into heaven or hell, as ſoon as he departs out of this world, which is a moſt alarming conſideration.

That the ſoul is reduced to a ſtate of inactivity by the depoſition of the groſs body, may be conjectured from its entire dependence upon the groſs body for its powers and faculties, in the manner explained in the foregoing part of this work. It ſeems from hence, that neither the elementary body, nor the immaterial principle, which is generally ſuppoſed to preſide over this, can exert themſelves without a ſet of ſuitable organs. And the ſcriptures of the New Teſtament, by ſpeaking of the reſurrection of the body as ſynonymous to a future life, favour this conjecture. There are alſo many paſſages in the Old

Teſtament,

Teſtament, and ſome in the New, which intimate death to be a ſtate of reſt, ſilence, ſleep, and inactivity, or even of inſenſibility. However, there are other paſſages of ſcripture, which favour the oppoſite conjecture. It ſeems alſo, that motion, and conſequently perception, may not ceaſe entirely in the elementary body after death; juſt as in the ſeeds of vegetables there is probably ſome ſmall inteſtine motion kept up, during winter, ſufficient to preſerve life, and the power of vegetation, on the return of the ſpring. And thus the good may be in a ſtate of reſt, tranquillity and happineſs, upon the whole rather pleaſant than painful, and the wicked in a contrary ſtate. Some imperfectly good perſons may alſo receive what remains of the neceſſary purification, during the interval between death and the reſurrection. And, upon the whole, we may gueſs, that though the ſoul may not be in an inſenſible ſtate, yet it will be in a paſſive one, ſomewhat reſembling a dream; and not exert any great activity till the reſurrection, being perhaps rouſed to this by the fire of the conflagration. For analogy ſeems to intimate, that the reſurrection will be effected by means ſtrictly natural. And thus every man may riſe in his own order, agreeably to the words of St. *Paul*.

However, let it be remembered, that all our notions concerning the intermediate ſtate are mere conjectures. It may be a ſtate of abſolute inſenſibility on one hand, or of great activity on the other. The ſcriptures are not explicit in this matter, and natural reaſon is utterly unequal to the taſk of determining in it. I have juſt hinted a middle opinion, as being more plauſible perhaps than either extreme. Such inquiries and diſquiſitions may a little awaken the mind, and withdraw it from the magical influences of this world: and, if the children of this world find a pleaſure and advantage in ruminating upon their views and deſigns in it, much more may the children of another world, by making that the ſubject of their meditations and inquiries.

SECT. IV.

OF THE TERMS OF SALVATION.

WE have ſeen in the foregoing ſection the greatneſs of the rewards and puniſhments of a future life. Now this is a point of infinite importance to us to be practically and duly conſidered. It is of infinite practical importance to come within the terms of ſalvation at the day of judgment. Though all God's creatures ſhould be made happy at laſt indefinitely, yet ſtill there is in the way in which we do, and muſt, and ought to conceive of theſe things, an infinite practical difference, whether at the reſurrection we enter into the *new Jeruſalem*, and *the kingdom of heaven*, or whether we be caſt into *the lake of fire, whoſe ſmoke aſcendeth up for ever and ever*. Let us inquire therefore, what are the terms of ſalvation after this ſhort life is ended, *i. e.* what degree of purity and perfection is required of us here, in order to be reſcued from the miſeries of another world, and advanced into the glorious manſions of the bleſſed.

PROP. XCI.

It follows from the foregoing Theory of our intellectual Pleaſures and Pains, that the Bulk of Mankind are not qualified for pure unmixed Happineſs.

FOR the bulk of mankind are by no means ſo far advanced in ſelf-annihilation, and in the love of God, and of his creatures in and through him, as appears, from the tenor of the foregoing obſervations, to be required for the attainment of pure happineſs. There

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are few, even in chriſtian countries, that ſo much as know what the true religion and purity of the heart is; at leaſt, that attend to it with care and earneſtneſs, and in pagan countries ſtill fewer by far. How exceedingly few then muſt that *little flock* be, whoſe wills are broken and ſubjected to the divine will, who delight in happineſs wherever they ſee it, who look upon what concerns themſelves with indifference, and are perpetually intent upon their Father's buſineſs, in any proper ſenſe of theſe words! And as experience ſhews us, that men are not carried from worldly-mindedneſs to heavenly-mindedneſs, nor advanced from lower degrees of the laſt to higher in general, but by paſſing through pain and ſorrow; ſo there is the greateſt reaſon from the mere light of nature to apprehend, that the bulk of mankind muſt ſuffer after death, before they can be qualified for pure and ſpiritual happineſs. If what we have felt here does not cure us of ſenſuality, ſelfiſhneſs, and malevolence, there is the greateſt reaſon from analogy to apprehend, that ſeverer puniſhments will be applied hereafter for that purpoſe.

PROP. XCII.

It follows from the Declarations of the Scriptures, that the Bulk of Mankind are not qualified for the Manſions of the Bleſſed.

For, according to the ſcriptures, *the gate that leadeth to life is ſtrait, and there are few who find it*, even though they *ſeek to enter in*. The righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, of the formal profeſſors, who yet are no adulterers, extortioners, &c. will not be in anywiſe ſufficient. *Many are called, and* but *few choſen*; and, agreeably hereto, the firſt fruits, which are a ſcripture type of the

choſen or elect, are ſmall in compariſon of the lump. In like manner, the *Jews* are few in compariſon of the Gentiles; the 144,000 in compariſon of all the tribes; the *Iſraelites*, in compariſon of all *Abraham*'s ſeed; *Elijah*, and the 7000 in compariſon of the prieſts and worſhippers of *Baal*. Thus alſo *Noah*, and his family, alone, were preſerved at the deluge; and of the *Iſraelites* a remnant only is ſaved, whilſt the reſt are rejected. And the reaſon of this ſmallneſs of the elect, the thing here typified, appears from the conditions. For we muſt take up our croſs daily, hate father and mother, and even our own lives, elſe we cannot be Chriſt's diſciples. We cannot ſerve God and *mammon* together. We muſt ſeek the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs, firſt; hunger and thirſt after it; and leave all to follow Chriſt. We muſt be born again, *i. e.* have quite new diſpoſitions, and take pleaſure in works of piety and charity, as we formerly did in ſenſual enjoyments, in honour and profit; we muſt be transformed by the renewal of our minds, walk according to the ſpirit, have our hearts in heaven, and do all to the glory of God. We muſt pray always; rejoice in tribulation; count all things as dung in compariſon of the knowledge of Chriſt, and him crucified; clothe the naked, feed the hungry, viſit the ſick, preach the goſpel in all nations. If there be ſtrife or vain-glory, ſchiſms or diviſions, amongſt us, we are ſtill carnal. If there be wrath, clamour, evil-ſpeaking, covetouſneſs, we cannot inherit the kingdom of God. If we govern not our tongues; we deceive ourſelves; our religion is vain. The luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life, are inconſiſtent with the love of the Father, *i. e.* with happineſs, with freedom from tormenting fear. Though we give all our goods to feed the poor, and our bodies to be burnt, even ſuffer martyrdom,

martyrdom, it profiteth nothing, unleſs we have that charity, that love, which ſeeketh not her own, but rejoiceth in the truth, &c. *i. e.* unleſs we become indifferent to ourſelves, and love God, and his truth, glory, and goodneſs, manifeſted in his creatures, alone. This world, with the bulk of its inhabitants, is all along in ſcripture repreſented as doomed to deſtruction, on account of the degeneracy, idolatry, wickedneſs, which every where prevail in it. The true *Jews* and chriſtians are a ſeparate people, in the world, not of the world, but hated and perſecuted by it, becauſe they ſhine as lights *in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe generation*, which cannot bear the light, &c. &c. for it would be endleſs to tranſcribe texts to this purpoſe. If a man has but courage to ſee and acknowledge the truth, he will find the ſame doctrine expreſſed or implied in every part of the Bible.

PROP. XCIII.

To apply the foregoing Doctrine, as well as we can, to the real Circumſtances of Mankind.

HERE we may obſerve, Firſt, That, leſt the beſt of men, in conſidering the number and greatneſs of their ſins, and comparing them with the purity of the ſcripture precepts, and the perfection of God, ſhould not dare to look up to him with a filial truſt and confidence in him, leſt their hearts ſhould fail, Chriſt our Saviour is ſent from heaven, God manifeſt in the fleſh, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life; that, though our ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhould by him, by means of his ſufferings, and our faith, be made as white as wool; and the great puniſhment, which muſt otherwiſe have been inflicted upon us according to what we call the courſe of nature, be averted. Faith then in Chriſt the righteous will ſup-

ply the place of that righteouſneſs, and ſinleſs perfection, to which we cannot attain.

Secondly, And yet this faith does not make void the law, and ſtrict conditions, above deſcribed; but, on the contrary, eſtabliſhes them. For no man can have this faith in Chriſt, but he who complies with the conditions. To have a ſenſe of our ſins, to be humble and contrite, and in this ſtate of mind to depend upon Chriſt as the mediator between God and man, as able and willing to ſave us, which is true faith, argues ſuch a diſpoſition, as will ſhew itſelf in works. And if our faith falls ſhort of this, if it does not overcome the world, and ſhew itſelf by works, it is of no avail; it is like that of the devils, who *believe and tremble.* Men muſt labour therefore after this faith as much as after any other chriſtian grace, or rather as much as after all the others; elſe they cannot obtain it. For it contains all the other chriſtian graces; and we can never know, that we have it, but by our having the chriſtian graces, which are its fruits.

Thirdly, Hence it follows, that a mere aſſurance, or ſtrong perſuaſion, of a man's own ſalvation, is neither a condition, nor a pledge of it. The faith above deſcribed *is*; and ſo are all other chriſtian graces, love, fear, truſt, repentance, regeneration, &c. when duly advanced and improved, ſo as to beget and perfect each other. But there is great reaſon to fear, both from the foregoing theory of the human mind, and from plain experience, that ſuch a ſtrong perſuaſion may be generated, whilſt men continue in many groſs corruptions; and that eſpecially if they be firſt perſuaded, that this ſtrong perſuaſion or aſſurance of ſalvation is a condition and pledge of it, and be of ſanguine tempers. For, if they be of fearful and melancholy ones, a contrary effect may be expected. All this appears from the foregoing theory of aſſent and diſſent. Eager deſires

ſires are attended with hope in the ſanguine, the vain-glorious, and the ſelf-conceited; and this hope, as it increaſes, becomes a comfortable aſſurance and perſuaſion, drawing to itſelf by degrees the inward ſentiments, that attend upon aſſent. On the contrary, eager deſires in the ſcrupulous, ſuperſtitious, and dejected, end in fear and diſſent. But if this dejection ſhould paſs into the oppoſite ſtate, then the anxious diffidence may at once, as it were, paſs into its oppoſite, a joyful perſuaſion.

But the chief thing to be obſerved here is, that the ſcriptures no where make an aſſurance of ſalvation the condition or pledge of it. Unleſs therefore it could be ſhewn to be included in faith, love, fear, and other ſcripture conditions, the doctrine of aſſurance, as it ſeems to be taught by ſome perſons, cannot be juſtified by the ſcriptures. But all the chriſtian graces may exiſt without an explicit aſſurance of, or even reflection upon, a man's own ſalvation; and fear, in particular, does not admit of this aſſurance. At the ſame time it ought to be remembered, that all acts of faith, love, truſt, gratitude, exerciſed towards God, leave peace and comfort in the mind; and that the frequent meditation upon the joys of another life, as our hope and crown, will excite us powerfully to obedience. We ought therefore to labour and pray moſt earneſtly for the perpetual increaſe of the hope of ſalvation; yet waiting patiently for it, if it ſhould be delayed through bodily indiſpoſition, or any other cauſe.

Fourthly, If it be aſked, where the privilege and advantage of faith lies, ſince works are neceſſary alſo, according to the foregoing account of it; I anſwer, Firſt, That the righteouſneſs and ſufferings of Chriſt, with our faith in them, are neceſſary to ſave us from our ſins, to enable us to perform our imperfect righteouſneſs; and, Secondly, That faith is propoſed by the ſcriptures as the means appoint-

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ed by God for rendering imperfect righteouſneſs equivalent, in his ſight, to perfect, and even of transforming it into perfect, as ſoon as we are freed from that body of fleſh and death, which wars againſt the law of our minds. And, as faith thus improves righteouſneſs, ſo every degree of righteouſneſs is a proportional preparative for faith; and, if it does not produce faith, will end in ſelf-righteouſneſs, and *Satanical* pride.

Fifthly, If it be alleged, in favour of the doctrine of juſtification by faith alone, and excluſively of works, that if the greateſt ſinner ſhould, in the midſt of his ſins and impieties, ſtop at once, and, with a deep ſenſe of them, earneſtly deſire forgiveneſs of God through Chriſt, firmly believing in him as his ſaviour, we cannot ſuppoſe, that God would reject him; I anſwer, that this deep ſenſe of ſin, this earneſt prayer, and firm belief, are things not to be attained in a ſhort ſpace of time, according to the uſual courſe of nature. A ſinner cannot be ſtopped at all in the career of his ſins, but by ſuffering; and there may indeed be a degree of ſuffering ſo great, as to work the due contrition in any given ſhort interval of time, according to the courſe of nature. But it does not appear from experience, that an effectual reformation is generally wrought in great ſinners by common calamities, nor even by very ſevere ones; though the ſuffering, one may hope, is not loſt; but will here or hereafter manifeſt its good effects. However, ſome few there are, who, recovering from a dangerous ſickneſs, or other great affliction, ſhew that their change of mind was of a permanent nature; that they were made *new creatures*; and that they had a real practical faith, ſufficient to overcome the world, generated in them. Now, ſuch a faith, though it have not time to evidence itſelf by works, will undoubtedly be accepted

cepted by God; ſince he knows, that time alone is wanting.

Sixthly, It will be aſked then, What are we to do for thoſe unhappy perſons, who have neglected to make uſe of the means of grace in due time, and who are ſeized by ſome fatal diſeaſe in the midſt of their ſins? I anſwer, that we muſt exhort them to ſtrive to the utmoſt, to pray that they may pray with faith, with earneſtneſs, with humility, with contrition. As far as the dying ſinner has theſe graces, no doubt they will avail him, either to alleviate his future miſery, or to augment his happineſs. And it ſeems plainly to be the doctrine of the ſcriptures, that all that can be done, muſt be done in this life. After death we enter into a moſt durable ſtate of happineſs or miſery. We muſt here, as in all other caſes, leave the whole to God, who judgeth not as man judgeth. Our compaſſion is as imperfect and erroneous, as our other virtues, eſpecially in matters where we ourſelves are ſo deeply concerned. The greateſt promiſes are made to fervent prayer. Let therefore not only the dying perſon himſelf, but all about him, who are thus moved with compaſſion for him, fly to God in this ſo great diſtreſs; not the leaſt devout ſigh or aſpiration can be loſt. God accepts the widow's mite, and even a cup of cold water, when beſtowed upon a diſciple and repreſentative of Chriſt. And if the prayer, love, faith, &c. either of the ſinner himſelf, or of any one elſe, be ſufficiently fervent, he will give him repentance unto ſalvation. But how ſhall any of us ſay this of ourſelves? This would be to depend upon ourſelves, and our own abilities, inſtead of having faith in Chriſt alone.

Theſe awakening conſiderations may be thought to lead to deſpair. But the deſpair ariſing from them appears to be infinitely ſafer, than that enthuſiaſtic faith, or rather preſumption, which is ſometimes

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the conſequence of the doctrine of juſtification by faith alone. If indeed a man's deſpair ſhould make him neglect God in his laſt moments, put away the thoughts of his ſins, and harden himſelf in a careleſs ſtupidity with reſpect to his future condition, this would be the worſt ſtate on this ſide the grave. But it is evident, that the foregoing conſiderations, have no ſuch tendency. Where a man is ſo terrified, that, like *David*, his heart fails him, or, like the publican, he dares not look up; that he does not think himſelf worthy of the high title of the child of God, or of admiſſion into the kingdom of heaven, all theſe emotions, all the agonies of this kind of deſpair, have a great tendency to better him, to purify and perfect him, to humble him, to break his ſtubborn will; and, though he ſhould not be able to pray but by the *groanings that are unutterable*, God, who knows the mind of the ſpirit, which is now working in him *a repentance not to be repented of*, *i. e.* if theſe groanings be ſufficiently earneſt, will accept him. If they fall ſhort of the goſpel terms, whatever theſe be, he will, however, be beaten with fewer ſtripes. And it muſt be remembered, that the queſtion is not whether a man ſhall die here in apparent peace, ſo as to comfort the friends and by-ſtanders under their alarming ſenſe of fear for themſelves, and compaſſion for him, but whether he ſhall awake in joy or torment. The deſpair, which ariſes from a fear, leſt our remaining diſpoſition to ſin be ſo great, our faith and love ſo weak, and our prayer ſo languid, as that we do not come up to the goſpel terms, is no offence againſt the divine goodneſs. We are to eſtimate this goodneſs in its particular manifeſtations by God's promiſes alone; and to do otherwiſe, would be to open a door to all wickedneſs, and lead ourſelves into the moſt fatal miſtakes. The ſcriptures declare in the moſt expreſs terms, that works are neceſſary to ſalvation. Faith

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is never ſaid to be effectual, when not attended by works; but, on the contrary, the true faith is emphatically characterized by its producing works. This faith is itſelf a work, as much as any other, the cauſe and the effect of the others, all proceeding from one univerſal cauſe through Chriſt. How then can we flatter ourſelves, that a mere ſtrong perſuaſion or aſſurance of ſalvation, of the application of Chriſt's merits to a man's ſelf in particular, will be of any avail? Eſpecially ſince it is evident, from the nature of the mind, that ſuch a perſuaſion may be generated in a wicked man; and alſo from experience, that it is ſometimes found in ſuch.

I have here endeavoured to treat this moſt important ſubject with the greateſt fidelity, and regard to truth. God's ways are indeed infinitely above our ways, *i. e.* infinitely more merciful in reality, ultimately, than we can expreſs or conceive. But all the threatenings of the ſcriptures have been fulfilled hitherto, as well as the promiſes. *There is no peace to the wicked.* The faith, which removeth mountains, availeth nothing without charity. *Not he that ſaith unto* Chriſt, *Lord, Lord, i. e.* merely applies to him for mercy and aſſiſtance, *but he that doth the will of* God, *ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven.* And we muſt not, we cannot, explain away theſe expreſs paſſages.

As in the body, ſo in the mind, great and laſting changes are ſeldom wrought in a ſhort time; and this the hiſtory of aſſociation ſhews to be the neceſſary conſequence of the connection between body and mind. And yet he who made the blind to ſee, the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the lepers clean, and the maimed whole, by a word, can as eaſily perform the analogous things, the antitypes, in the mind. But then it is to be obſerved, that the bodily changes by miracles were not made by our Saviour, except in conſequence of previous changes in the mind.

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And thus indeed *to him that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have more abundantly.* Love, faith, fear, prayer, will carry men on in a very rapid progreſs. But then the work of regeneration is already advanced in them. It is of infinite conſequence not to lay a ſtumbling-block, or rock of offence, in our own way, or in that of other's; not to *break the leaſt commandment, or teach others ſo to do.* Let us *not be deceived, God is not mocked; what a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap. Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh,* muſt come *upon every ſoul of man that does evil, upon every child of diſobedience.*

Seventhly, It follows from the purity of the ſcripture precepts, that even the better ſort of chriſtians may be under conſiderable uncertainties as to their own ſtate; and that in many caſes, as a man grows better, and conſequently ſees more diſtinctly his own impurity, he will have greater fears for himſelf, and perhaps think, that he grows worſe. Now the final cauſe of this is undoubtedly, that we may make our calling and election ſure, and leſt he that thinketh he ſtandeth ſhould fall. And yet, as wicked perſons, let them endeavour ever ſo much to ſtupefy themſelves, muſt have frequent forebodings of the judgment that will be paſt upon them at the laſt day; ſo good perſons will generally have great comforts in the midſt of their ſorrows. The ſcripture promiſes are ſo gracious and unlimited, the precepts for loving God, and rejoicing in him, ſo plain and expreſs, and the hiſtories of God's mercies towards great ſinners, and the great ſins of good men, are ſo endearing, that whoever reads and meditates upon the ſcripture daily, will find *light ſpring up* to him *in the midſt of darkneſs; will hope againſt hope, i. e.* will hope for the mercy of God, though he has the greateſt doubts and fears in relation to his own virtue, faith, love, hope; and fly to him, as his father and ſavious, for that very reaſon. This will beget earneſt and inceſſant

ceſſant prayer, a perpetual care not to offend, and a reference of all things to God. When ſuch a perſon ſurveys his own actions, and finds that he does in many inſtances of thought, word, and deed, govern himſelf by the love and fear of God, by a ſenſe of duty, by the goſpel motives of future reward and puniſhment, &c. theſe are to him evident marks, that the ſpirit of God works with his ſpirit; he is encouraged to have confidence towards God; and this confidence ſpurs him on to greater watchfulneſs and earneſtneſs, if he does not dwell too long upon it. When, on the other hand, he finds many unmortified deſires, and many failings in his beſt words and actions, with ſome groſs neglects perhaps, or even ſome commiſſions, this terrifies and alarms him; adds wings to his prayers, and zeal to his endeavours. And it is happy for us, in this world of temptations, to be thus kept between hope and fear. Not but that very good perſons, who have been conſtant and earneſt for a long courſe of time, who have paſſed through ſevere trials, who live, as the firſt chriſtians did, in perpetual apprehenſions of ſufferings and death, or who, like their bleſſed Lord and Maſter, go about doing good, and preaching the goſpel to the poor, may be always favoured with the ſight of the promiſed land; and ſeveral of theſe may date the riſe of this happy ſtate from ſome remarkable point in their lives. But there is great danger of being impoſed upon here by the wonderful ſubtlety of the natural operations of the mind. When a man begins to fancy, that an inward ſentiment, much or long deſired by him, ſuch as the aſſurance of his ſalvation, has happened or will happen to him, this impoſes upon his memory by imperceptible degrees in one caſe; and begets the ſentiment itſelf, the aſſurance, in the other. Such a factitious aſſurance can therefore be no evidence for itſelf. It is a mental affection, of the ſame kind with

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the reſt; and can leſs be depended upon, as a teſt, than plain actions. Mere ideas, and internal feelings, muſt be leſs certain marks of the prevailing, permanent diſpoſition of our hearts, than the tenor of our actions, which is the natural and neceſſary fruit of it. And we ought to judge of ourſelves by our fruits, as well as of thoſe who pretend to be prophets. *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, nor an evil tree good fruit.* Here we may lay our foundation, as upon a rock. When indeed this perſuaſion, or aſſurance, is the reſult of an earneſt impartial examination into our fruits, and of our conſcience not condemning us, it may reaſonably afford confidence towards God; becauſe our conſcience was intended by God to inform us of our ſtate; as appears both from ſcripture and reaſon. But a conſtant abſolute aſſurance, *i. e.* appearance thereof (for it can be no more, till we have eſcaped all the hazards of this life, and our judge has paſſed his ſentence upon us in another), may be dangerous even to good men, and render them by inſenſible degrees ſecure, neglectful of neceſſary duties, and ſelf-conceited. However, ſince a hope, free from all anxious fears, ſeems to be often given by God as a comfort in great trials, and a reward for behaving well under ſuch, and perſevering faithfully, as I obſerved juſt now; we have the greateſt encouragement to do and to ſuffer every thing that God requires of us, to be *fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord,* to *watch and pray always,* &c. ſince we may expect to obtain this hope thereby, and in it an hundred fold for all that we give up in this world, as well as everlaſting life in the world to come.

And though it be proper to comfort religious perſons under bodily or mental diſorders, which fill their minds with diſproportionate fears and ſcruples, by informing them, that a ſolicitude about our ſalvation is the ſure means of obtaining it; that this affliction is to be

be endured with patience, and confidence in God, as much as any other; that it is attended with the ſame advantages as common afflictions, and alſo with ſome peculiar to itſelf, ſuch as putting us upon a thorough examination of our hearts; and that this ſevere chaſtening in the preſent world is the ſtrongeſt mark, that we are loved by God, and therefore ſhall be ſaved in the world to come; yet the ſame perſons are to be admoniſhed, that a great degree of fearfulneſs and ſcrupuloſity often proceeds from ſome ſelf-deceit and prevarication at the bottom. There is probably ſome ſecret ſin, ſome ſin that circumvents them more eaſily and frequently than the reſt, of which they may not perhaps be fully aware, and yet about which they have great ſuſpicions and checks, if they would hearken to them fully and fairly. They ought therefore, with all earneſtneſs and honeſty, to deſire God to try and examine them, and to ſeek the ground of their hearts; and, in conſequence of this prayer, to ſet about it themſelves in the preſence of God. And if this be neceſſary for the ſcrupulous and feeble-minded, even for the children of God, how much more for the careleſs, voluptuous, profane world! How ought they to be alarmed and exhorted to hear the voice of wiſdom in the preſent life, during *the accepted time, leſt fear come upon them as deſolation, and deſtruction as a whirlwind!*

Laſtly, We may obſerve, that as undue confidence leads to ſecurity, and conſequently to ſuch ſins, as deſtroy this confidence, unleſs we be ſo unhappy, as to be able to recal the internal feeling of this confidence without ſufficient contrition; and as the diſproportionate fearfulneſs, which is its oppoſite, begets vigilance, and thus deſtroys itſelf alſo; whence perſons in the progreſs of a religious courſe are often paſſing from one extreme to another; ſo it is difficult for ſerious perſons, in thinking or ſpeaking about the terms of ſalvation, to reſt in any particular point;

they are always apt to qualify the laſt deciſion, whatever it be, either with ſome alarming caution, or comfortable ſuggeſtion, leſt they ſhould miſlead themſelves or others. This is part of that obſcurity and uncertainty, which is our chief guard and ſecurity in this ſtate of probation, and the *daily bread* of our ſouls. Let me once more add this neceſſary obſervation, viz. that future eternal happineſs is of infinitely more weight than preſent comfort; and therefore that we ought to labour infinitely more after purity and perfection, than even after ſpiritual delights. We are only upon our journey through the wilderneſs to the land of *Canaan*; and, as we cannot want manna from day to day for our ſupport, it is of little concernment, whether we have more delicious food. Let us therefore *hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs* itſelf; that ſo we may firſt *be filled* with it, and afterwards, in due time, may obtain that *eternal weight of glory*, which will be the reward of it.

SECT.

SECT. V.

OF THE FINAL HAPPINESS OF ALL MANKIND IN SOME DISTANT FUTURE STATE.

PROP. XCIV.

It is probable from Reaſon that all Mankind will be made happy ultimately.

For, Firſt, It has been obſerved all along in the courſe of this work, that all the evils that befal either body or mind in this ſtate, have a tendency to improve one or both. If they fail of producing a peculiar, appropriated intermediate good effect, they muſt, however, neceſſarily contribute to the annihilation of that *ſelf*, carnal or ſpiritual, groſs or refined, which is an inſuperable bar to our happineſs in the pure love of God, and of his works. Now, if we reaſon at all concerning a future ſtate, it muſt be from analogies taken from this; and that we are allowed to reaſon, that we are able to do it with ſome juſtneſs, concerning a future ſtate, will appear from the great coincidence of the foregoing natural arguments for a future ſtate, and for the rewards and puniſhments of it, with what the ſcriptures have delivered upon the ſame heads; alſo becauſe a ſimilar kind of reaſonings in reſpect of the future ſtates, which ſucceed in order from infancy to old age, is found to be juſt, and to afford many uſeful directions and predictions. We ought therefore to judge, that the evils of a future ſtate will have the ſame tendency, and final cauſe, as thoſe of this life, viz. to meliorate and perfect our natures, and to prepare them for ultimate unlimited happineſs in the love of God, and of his works.

Secondly, The generation of benevolence, by the natural and neceſſary tendency of our frames, is a ſtrong argument for the ultimate happineſs of all mankind. It is inconſiſtent to ſuppoſe, that God ſhould thus compel us to learn univerſal unlimited benevolence; and then not provide food for it. And both this and the foregoing argument ſeem concluſive, though we ſhould not take in the divine benevolence. They are both ſupported by the analogy and uniformity apparent in the creation, by the mutual adaptations and correſpondencies of things exiſting at different times, and in different places: but they receive much additional force from the conſideration of the goodneſs of God, if that be firſt proved by other evidences; as they are themſelves the ſtrongeſt evidences for it, when taken in a contrary order of reaſoning.

And as the benevolence of one part of the creation is thus an argument for the happineſs of the other; ſo, ſince benevolence is itſelf happineſs, a tendency to learn it in any being is alſo an argument for his own happineſs. And, upon the whole, ſince God has commanded his beloved ſons, the good, to love and compaſſionate every being, that comes within their cognizance, by the voice of their natures ſpeaking within them, we cannot ſuppoſe, that theſe his favourites (to ſpeak according to preſent appearances, and our neceſſary conceptions, which with this caution is juſtifiable) will fail of their proper reward in the gratification of this their benevolence.

Thirdly, The infinite goodneſs of God is an argument for the ultimate happineſs of all mankind. This appears without any particular diſcuſſion of this attribute. But it may not be amiſs for the reader juſt to review the evidences for it above exhibited, and their tendency to prove the ultimate happineſs of all God's creatures.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, The infinite happineſs and perfection of God is an argument for, and, as it were, a pledge of, the ultimate happineſs and perfection of all his creatures. For theſe attributes, being infinite, muſt bear down all oppoſition from the quarters of miſery and imperfection. And this argument will be much ſtronger, if we ſuppoſe (with reverence be it ſpoken!) any intimate union between God and his creatures; and that, as the happineſs of the creatures ariſes from their love and worſhip of God, ſo the happineſs of God conſiſts, ſhews itſelf, &c. (for one does not know how to expreſs this properly) in love and beneficence to the creatures. As God is preſent every where, knows and perceives every thing, he may alſo, in a way infinitely ſuperior to our comprehenſion, feel every where for all his creatures. Now, according to this, it would ſeem to us, that all muſt be brought to ultimate infinite happineſs, which is, in his eye, preſent infinite happineſs.

Fifthly, The impartiality of God, in reſpect of all his creatures, ſeems to argue, that, if one be made infinitely happy upon the balance, all will be made ſo. That benevolence, which is infinite, muſt be impartial alſo; muſt look upon all individuals, and all degrees of happineſs, with an equal eye; muſt ſtand in a relation of indifference to them all. Now this is really ſo, if we admit the third of the foregoing ſuppoſitions concerning the divine benevolence. If all individuals be at laſt infinitely happy upon the balance, they are ſo at preſent in the eye of God, *i. e.* he is perfectly impartial to all his creatures. And thus every intermediate finite degree of miſery, how great ſoever, may be conſiſtent with the impartiality of God. But to ſuppoſe, before the creatures *A* and *B* exiſted, that *A* was made by God to be eternally happy, and *B* made to be eternally miſerable, ſeems as irreconcileable to God's impartiality, as to his benevolence. That both ſhould be made for

eternal and infinite happineſs, one to enjoy it in one way, the other in another, one by paſſing through much pain, the other by paſſing through little or perhaps none, one by an acceleration in one period of his exiſtence, the other in another, &c. &c. is perfectly conſiſtent with God's impartiality; for, the happineſs of each being infinite at preſent in the eye of God, his eye muſt regard them equally. And, even in the eye of finite beings, if *A*'s happineſs ſeems leſs than *B*'s, in one reſpect, becauſe *A* paſſes through more pain, it may ſeem greater in another, becauſe he arrives at greater degrees of it in leſs time. But this is all appearance. Different finite beings form different judgments according to their different experiences, and ways of reaſoning. Who therefore ſhall be made the ſtandard? Not the inferior orders certainly. And, if the ſuperior, we ſhall not be able to reſt, till we conclude, that all that appears to all finite beings, is falſe and deluſive; and that the judgment of the infinite being is the only true real judgment. Now I have endeavoured to ſhew, according to the method of ultimate ratios, how, allowing the third ſuppoſition concerning the divine goodneſs, all individuals are equally happy in the eye of God. And thus the impartiality of God is vindicated, according to the truth and reality of things, in the judgment of his own infinite underſtanding.

Sixthly, All the foregoing reaſoning ſeems to be ſomewhat more ſhort and clear upon the hypotheſis of mechaniſm; but it is not invalidated by that of free-will. For free-will muſt be conſidered as the production of infinite power, and therefore as being ſuited to the reſt of the divine attributes, his benevolence, happineſs, and impartiality, and to all the methods, by which God conducts men to benevolence and happineſs. Or, if the hypotheſis of free-will be a bar to the foregoing reaſonings in their

their full extent, it cannot, however, account for miſery upon the whole, much leſs for eternal miſery. To ſuppoſe that God wills and deſires the happineſs of all his creatures, and yet that he has given them a power, by which many of them will, in fact, make themſelves eternally miſerable, alſo that he foreſees this in general, and even in each particular caſe, is either to ſuppoſe God under ſome fatal neceſſity of giving ſuch a power; or elſe to take away his unlimited benevolence in reality, after that it has been allowed in words. If therefore God has given men free-will in ſuch a meaſure, as that they may bring upon themſelves finite miſery thereby in the preſent ſtate, or in any future intermediate one, we muſt, however, ſuppoſe it to be ſo reſtrained, as that it ſhall not occaſion infinite and eternal miſery. *The cauſe of the cauſe is alſo the cauſe of the thing cauſed*; which is ſurely as evident in the application of it to the preſent ſubject, as in any other inſtance, where it cannot be applied.

Seventhly, There are many obvious and undeniable arguments, taken from the relative attributes of God, which firſt exclude the eternal miſery of his creatures, and then eſtabliſh their ultimate happineſs by neceſſary, or, at leaſt, by probable conſequence. Thus the whole tenor of nature repreſents God to us as our creator, preſerver, governor, friend, and father. All ages and nations have fallen into this language; and it is verified every day by the wonderful beauty, harmony, and beneficence, manifeſted in the works of the creation, and particularly in the exquiſite make of our bodies and minds. Shall then a Creator who is a friend and father, create for eternal infinite miſery? Can any intermediate ſuppoſitions, free-will, perverſeneſs, reprobateneſs, &c. reconcile and unite extremes ſo utterly diſcordant? Will he preſerve an exiſtence, which ceaſes to afford happineſs, and can now only pro-

duce miſery without end? Will not the governor and judge of all the earth do right? In whatever manner ſin be eſtimated, it muſt be finite, becauſe it is the work of a finite mind, of finite principles and paſſions. To ſuppoſe therefore a ſinner to be abſolutely condemned to infinite irreverſible miſery, on account of the finite ſins of this life, ſeems moſt highly injurious to the juſtice of God. And to ſay, that this infinite irreverſible miſery is not merely the conſequence of the ſins of this life, but alſo of thoſe to be committed in another, is to give a power of repenting, and becoming virtuous, as well as of ſinning, in another life; whence the ſentence might be reverſed, contrary to the ſuppoſition.

The worſt man of thoſe who go to heaven, and the beſt of thoſe who go to hell, ſeem to us, if we will reaſon upon theſe ſubjects, as we do upon others, to differ but by an infiniteſimal difference, as one may ſay; and yet the reward of the firſt, being eternal, however ſmall in each finite portion of time, muſt at laſt become infinite in magnitude; and the puniſhment of the laſt in like manner. There would therefore be a double infinite difference in the reward and puniſhment, where the virtue and vice cauſing theſe reſpectively, have only an infinitely ſmall one. To ſay, that, in ſuch caſes, the rewards and puniſhments of another life may be ſo conducted by a mixture of happineſs and miſery in each, as that the balance ſhall not become ultimately infinite in either, is to take away all hopes and fears relating to a future ſtate, *i. e.* morally and practically to take away the ſtate itſelf.

Again, can it be ſuppoſed, that an infinitely merciful Father will caſt off his ſon utterly, and doom him to eternal miſery, without farther trials than what this life affords? We ſee numberleſs inſtances of perſons at preſent abandoned to vice, who yet, according to all probable appearances, might be reformed

reformed by a proper mixture of correction, inſtruction, hope, and fear. And what man is neither able nor willing to do, may and muſt, as ſhould ſeem, be both poſſible to God, and actually effected by him. He muſt have future diſcipline of a ſeverer kind for thoſe whom the chaſtiſements of this life did not bring to themſelves. Yet ſtill they will all be fatherly chaſtiſements, intended to amend and perfect, not to be final and vindictive. That the bulk of ſinners are not utterly incorrigible, even common obſervation ſhews; but the hiſtory of aſſociation makes it ſtill more evident; and it ſeems very repugnant to analogy to ſuppoſe, that any ſinners, even the very worſt that ever lived, ſhould be ſo, ſhould be hardened beyond the reach of all ſuffering, of all ſelfiſhneſs, hope, fear, good-will, gratitude, &c. For we are all alike in kind, and do not differ greatly in degree here. We have each of us paſſions of all ſorts, and lie open to influences of all ſorts; ſo as that the perſons *A* and *B*, in whatever different proportions their intellectual affections now exiſt, may, by a ſuitable ſet of impreſſions, become hereafter alike.

Theſe and many ſuch like reaſonings muſt occur to attentive perſons upon this ſubject, ſo as to make it highly unſuitable to the benevolence of the Deity, or to the relations which he bears to us, according to the mere light of nature, that infinite irreverſible miſery, to commence at death, ſhould be the puniſhment of the ſins of this life. And, by purſuing this method of reaſoning, we ſhall be led firſt to exclude miſery upon the balance, and then to hope for the ultimate unlimited happineſs of all mankind.

PROP.

PROP. XCV.

It is probable from the Scriptures, that all Mankind will be made ultimately happy.

In conſidering the doctrine of the ſcriptures upon this head, it will firſt be requiſite to ſhew, that the texts alleged to prove the abſolutely eternal and irreverſible miſery of the wicked in another life, may juſtly be interpreted in a different ſenſe.

Now the *Greek* words tranſlated *eternal*, *everlaſting*, and *for ever*, in the New Teſtament, do not by derivation ſtand for an abſolute eternity, neither are they always uſed in this ſenſe in the New Teſtament, the *Septuagint*, or pagan authors. The ſame may be ſaid of the correſponding *Hebrew* words. It is true indeed, that they generally repreſent a long duration; and this is ſometimes limited by the context, or nature of the ſubject, ſometimes not. Now, according to this interpretation, the puniſhments of the wicked will be of great duration, ſuppoſe of one or more long ages or diſpenſations. But one might rather conclude from the words of the original, if their derivation be conſidered, that they will end at the expiration of ſome ſuch long period, than that they will be abſolutely eternal.

If it be ſaid, that the eternity of God is expreſſed by the ſame words; I anſwer, that here the nature of the ſubject gives a ſenſe to the words, whereof they are otherwiſe incapable. It may be urged in like manner, that the duration of future rewards is expreſſed by the ſame words; but then the abſolute eternity of this duration is not perhaps deducible at all from theſe or any other words. We muſt in this entirely refer ourſelves to the bounty and benevolence of our Creator, and depend upon him for all our expectations. Beſides, the nature of the ſubject differs widely here. To ſuppoſe the miſery

miſery of the wicked to be, in every reſpect, equal and parallel to the happineſs of the good, is quite contrary to the general tenor of the ſcriptures; and looks like ſetting up the *Manichean* doctrine of two oppoſite infinite principles, a doctrine every where condemned in effect, though not in expreſs words, both by the Old and New Teſtament. We may add, that the happineſs of the good is alſo denoted in ſcripture by incorruption, indiſſolubility, &c. as well as by the words applied to the puniſhments of the wicked.

The words of our Saviour, *where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched*, are thought by ſome to be a ſtrong argument for the abſolute eternity of future puniſhment. But as theſe words are taken from *Iſaiah*, and allude to the puniſhment of the malefactors, whoſe carcaſes were ſuffered to rot upon the ground, or burnt in the valley of *Hinnom*, they appear to be too popular and figurative to juſtify ſuch an interpretation. And yet they ſeem plainly intended to declare the very long duration of future puniſhment; and that, as the worms, which feed upon a putrefied body, or the fire, which burns it in this world, do themſelves come to a certain and known period, the miſery of another world, and the fire of hell, will have no definite one; but continue till they have conſumed the ſin and guilt which feed them. In this way of interpretation, the paſſage under conſideration would agree with that concerning the *payment of the laſt farthing*.

Our Saviour's expreſſion concerning *Judas*, viz. *that it had been good for him, that he had not been born*, cannot indeed be alleged for the proof of the eternity of future puniſhment; but it ſeems to oppoſe the ſuppoſition of the ultimate happineſs of all. However, this expreſſion may be popular and proverbial; or it may perhaps denote, that his laſt agonies, or his ſufferings in another world, ſhould

outweigh

outweigh all his preceding happineſs, or ſome way admit of an interpretation conſiſtent with the propoſition under conſideration. For it does not appear to be ſufficiently clear and preciſe for an abſolute diſproof of it. We may add, that as every man, who at his death falls ſhort of the terms of ſalvation, whatever theſe be, *crucifies the Son of God afreſh*, according to the language of St. *Paul*; ſo he will have reaſon, according to his then neceſſary conceptions, to wiſh with *Judas*, that he had never been born. *O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end!*

Now, as the words of the New Teſtament do not neceſſarily infer the abſolute eternity of puniſhment; ſo the general tenor of reaſoning there uſed, with numberleſs paſſages both of the Old and New Teſtaments, concerning the mercy of God, his readineſs to forgive, &c. favour the contrary opinion, And this is a farther reaſon for interpreting theſe texts of an indefinitely long duration only; and that eſpecially if the ſmall number of them, and the infinite importance of the doctrine, which they are ſuppoſed to contain, be alſo taken into conſideration.

To the ſame purpoſe we may obſerve, that there is nothing in all St. *Paul's* Epiſtles, from whence the abſolute eternity of future puniſhment can be at all inferred, except the words, *everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of our Lord*, 2 Theſſ. i. 9. though the Epiſtles to the *Romans* and *Hebrews* are both of them general ſummaries of the chriſtian religion, and though he ſpeaks in both of future puniſhment. In the Epiſtle to the *Romans*, he ſays, *Tribulation and anguiſh* (not eternal tribulation) ſhall be *upon every ſoul of man, that doth evil*; alſo that the *wages of ſin is death*, not eternal death, or eternal puniſhment; *whereas the gift of God is eternal life.* In the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, he aſks, of how much ſorer puniſhment than temporal death, an apoſtate

is to be thought worthy? Which ſeems not likely for him to do, had he believed it eternal. In like manner, there is nothing of this kind in St. *Luke*'s Goſpel, or his *Acts of the Apoſtles*, in St. *John*'s Goſpel, or his Epiſtles, or in the Epiſtles of St. *James*, St. *Peter*, or St. *Jude*. And yet good men now, who believe the eternity of puniſhment, ſcarce ever fail to inſiſt upon it moſt earneſtly in their diſcourſes and exhortations. For, if it be a doctrine of the chriſtian religion, it is ſo eſſential a one, as that it could not have been omitted by any inſpired writer, nor fail to have been declared in the moſt expreſs terms, which certainly cannot be ſaid of any of the texts alleged to prove the eternity of puniſhment. The words tranſlated *eternal*, and *for ever*, muſt have been ambiguous to the *Jews*, *i. e.* to the firſt chriſtians; and the figurative expreſſion, *their worm dieth not*, &c. is far leſs determinate than many phraſes, which our Saviour might have choſen, had it been his intention to denounce abſolutely eternal miſery.

To this we may add, that it does not appear from the writings of the moſt ancient fathers, that they put ſuch a conſtruction upon the words of the New Teſtament; and the omiſſion of this doctrine in the ancient creeds ſhews, that it was no original doctrine, or not thought eſſential; which yet could not be, if it was believed; or that many eminent perſons for ſome centuries were of a contrary opinion. And indeed the doctrine of purgatory, as now taught by the papiſts, ſeems to be a corruption of a genuine doctrine held by the ancient fathers concerning a purifying fire.

It may perhaps be, that the abſolute eternity of puniſhment was not received, till after the introduction of metaphyſical ſubtleties relating to time, eternity, &c. and the ways of expreſſing theſe, *i. e.*

not

not till after the pagan philoſophy, and vain deceit, had mixed itſelf with and corrupted chriſtianity.

Still farther, it does by no means appear to be conſonant to the nature of the chriſtian religion to interpret the New Teſtament in a ſtrict literal manner, or adhere to phraſes in oppoſition to the general tenor of it. Our Saviour in many places appeals to the natural equitable judgments of his auditors. The evangeliſts and apoſtles all enter into the reaſons of things; the goſpels are ſhort memoirs; the epiſtles were written to friends, and new converts; and the nature of ſuch writings muſt be very different from that of a preciſe determinate law, ſuch as that of *Moſes*, or the civil law of any country. And indeed herein lies one material difference between the rigid *Jewiſh* diſpenſation, and the chriſtian, which laſt is called by St. *James* the *perfect law of liberty*. From all which it follows, that we are rather to follow the general tenor, than to adhere to particular expreſſions. And this will appear ſtill more reaſonable, when it is conſidered, that we are yet but novices in the language of the Old and New Teſtaments, the relations which they bear to each other, and their declarations concerning future events.

Another argument againſt interpreting the paſſages above referred to, in the ſenſe of abſolutely eternal miſery, is, that there are many other paſſages, whoſe ſtrict and literal ſenſe is contrary thereto. And in ſuch a caſe it ſeems, that the infinite goodneſs of God, ſo many ways declared in the ſcriptures, muſt ſoon turn the ſcale. For the ſcriptures muſt be made conſiſtent with themſelves; and the veracity and goodneſs of God ſeem much rather to oblige him to perform a promiſe, than to execute a threatening. I will mention a few paſſages, ſome of which it may be obſerved even eſtabliſh the contrary doctrine of the ultimate happineſs of all mankind.

Thus

Thus the moſt natural, as well as the moſt ſtrict and literal ſenſe of the words, *As in Adam all die, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive*, is the ultimate happineſs of all the children of *Adam*, of all mankind. God's *mercy* is declared to *endure for ever*; and he is ſaid *not to keep his anger for ever:* which expreſſions, in their firſt and moſt obvious ſenſe, are quite inconſiſtent with the abſolute eternity of puniſhment. Our Saviour ſays, that the perſon who is not reconciled to his brother *ſhall not be diſcharged till he has paid the laſt farthing*; which intimates, that there is a time when he will be diſcharged. In like manner the debtor, who owed his lord ten thouſand talents, is delivered over to the tormentors, till he pay theſe. To ſay that he can never pay them, becauſe as we have all our faculties from God, ſo we can merit nothing from God, is to embrace the mechanical hypotheſis, which, in the judgment of all, muſt be utterly inconſiſtent with the eternity of puniſhment. For, if a man cannot have merit, he cannot have demerit. To ſuppoſe a creature any way brought into being upon ſuch terms as to be only capable of demerit, ſeems moſt highly injurious to the attributes of God, by whatever means this be effected, the fall of our firſt parents, or any other.

Again, *God in judgment remembers mercy.* This is ſaid in general; and therefore it ought not to be confined to the judgments of this world. And to do ſo, when all the pleaſures and pains of this world are every where in the New Teſtament declared unworthy of our regard in compariſon of thoſe of another, is highly unſuitable to the goodneſs of God. But indeed this cannot be done without departing from the moſt obvious literal ſenſe. The ſame may be ſaid of the paſſages, *God is not extreme to mark what is done amiſs; that he is loving to every man; that his mercy, his tender mercy, is over all his works*, &c. Can it be ſaid with any appearance of truth,

truth, that God will give an infinite overbalance of miſery to thoſe beings whom he loves.

It may very well be ſuppoſed, that though the puniſhments of a future ſtate be finite; yet this ſhould not be declared in ſo many words in the ſcriptures. For ſuch a procedure would be analogous to the gradual opening of all God's diſpenſations of mercy. Mankind in their infant ſtate were not able to receive ſuch kind of nouriſhment; neither are all perhaps yet able. But, if future puniſhments be abſolutely eternal, it is hard to conceive why this ſhould not have been declared in the moſt expreſs terms, and in many places of ſcripture; alſo how there ſhould be ſo many paſſages there, which are apparently inconſiſtent therewith.

There remains one argument more, and of great weight in my opinion, againſt interpreting any paſſages of ſcripture ſo as to denounce abſolutely eternal miſery. This is, the declarations of the ſcriptures concerning the ſmallneſs of the number of the elect, and the great difficulty of entering in at the ſtrait gate, already taken notice of. To ſuppoſe future puniſhments to be abſolutely eternal, is to ſuppoſe, that the chriſtian diſpenſation condemns far the greater part of mankind to infinite miſery upon the balance, whilſt yet it is every where declared to be a diſpenſation of mercy, to be *glory to God*, and *good-will to men*; which is a great apparent inconſiſtency. And indeed, unleſs the doctrine of abſolutely eternal puniſhment be taken away, it ſeems impracticable to convice the world of the great purity and perfection required by the goſpel in order to our entrance into the kingdom of heaven. If there be no puniſhment in a another ſtate, beſides what is abſolutely eternal, men of very low degrees of virtue will hope to eſcape this, and conſequently to eſcape with impunity: whereas, if there be a purging fire, into which all the wicked are to be caſt, to remain

remain and ſuffer there according to their demerits, far beyond what men generally ſuffer in this life; and if there be only few, that are admitted to happineſs after the expiration of this life, without ſuch farther purification; what vigour and earneſtneſs ſhould we uſe to eſcape ſo great a puniſhment, and to be of the happy number of thoſe, whoſe names are written in the book of life!

This may ſuffice to ſhew, that the abſolute eternity of future puniſhment cannot be concluded from the ſcriptures. We are next to inquire what evidences they afford for the ultimate happineſs of all mankind. I have already mentioned ſome paſſages, which favour this doctrine; but I intend now to propoſe two arguments of a more general nature.

Firſt, then, It may be obſerved, that the ſcriptures give a ſanction to moſt of the foregoing arguments, taken from the light of nature, for this doctrine, by reaſoning in the ſame manner. Thus the puniſhments of the *Jews* and others are repreſented as chaſtiſements, *i. e.* as evils tending to produce a good greater than themſelves. Our benevolence to our children is repreſented by Chriſt, as an argument of the infinitely greater benevolence of God our heavenly father. God promiſes to make *Abraham* happy by making his poſterity happy, and them happy by making them the inſtruments of happineſs to all the nations of the earth (which they are ſtill to be probably in a much more ample manner, than they have ever yet been). Now this ſhews, that the happineſs, intended for us all, is the gratification of our benevolence. The goodneſs of God is every where repreſented as prevailing over his ſeverity; he remembers good actions to thouſands of generations, and puniſhes evil ones only to the third and fourth. Not a ſparrow is forgotten before him; he giveth to all their meat in due

ſeaſon; pities us, as a father does his children; and ſets our ſins as far from us, as heaven is from earth, &c. All which kind of language ſurely implies both infinite mercy in the forgiveneſs of ſin, and infinite love in advancing his purified children. We are all the offspring of God, and, by conſequence, agreeably to other phraſes, are *heirs of all things, heirs of God, and coheirs with Chriſt, members of the myſtical body of Chriſt, and of each other, i. e.* we are all partakers of the happineſs of God, through his bounty and mercy. God is the God of the *Gentiles*, as well as of the *Jews*; and has *concluded* them *all in unbelief*, only *that he might have mercy upon all.* And, in general, all the arguments for the ultimate happineſs of all mankind, taken from the relations which we bear to God, as our creator, preſerver, governor, father, friend, and God, are abundantly atteſted by the ſcriptures.

Secondly, There are in the ſcriptures ſome arguments for the ultimate reſtoration and happineſs of all mankind, which now ſeem ſufficiently full and ſtrong, and which yet could not be underſtood in former ages; at leaſt we ſee, that, in fact, they were not. Of this kind is the hiſtory of the *Jewiſh* ſtate, with the prophecies relating thereto. For we may obſerve, that, according to the ſcriptures, the body politic of the *Jews* muſt be made flouriſhing and happy, whether they will or no, by the ſeverities which God inflicts upon them. Now the *Jewiſh* ſtate, as has been already remarked, appears to be a type of each individual in particular, on one hand; and of mankind in general on the other.

Thus, alſo, it is foretold, that Chriſt will *ſubdue all things to himſelf.* But ſubjection to Chriſt, according to the figurative prophetic ſtyle of the ſcriptures, is happineſs, not merely ſubjection by compulſion, like that to an earthly conqueror. Agreeably to this, all things are to be *gathered together in one in Chriſt*, both

both thoſe which are *in heaven*, and thoſe *on earth*: and St. *John* ſaw *every creature in heaven, in earth, under the earth, and in the ſea, and all that were in them, praiſing God.*

The prayer of faith can remove mountains; all things are poſſible to it; and, if we could ſuppoſe all men defective in this article, in praying with faith for the ultimate happineſs of mankind, ſurely our Saviour muſt do this; his prayer for his crucifiers cannot ſurely fail to obtain pardon and happineſs for them.

We are commanded to love God with our whole powers, to be joyful in him, to praiſe him ever more, not only for his goodneſs to us, but alſo for that to all the children of men. But ſuch love and joy, to be unbounded, preſuppoſe unbounded goodneſs in God, to be manifeſted to all mankind in due time; elſe there would be ſome men, on whoſe accounts we could not rejoice in God. At the ſame time, the delay of this manifeſtation of God's goodneſs, with the ſeverity exerciſed towards particulars, in their progreſs to happineſs, beget ſubmiſſion, reſignation, *fear and trembling*, in us, till at laſt we come to that *perfect love that caſts out fear.*

It may perhaps be, that the writers of the Old and New Teſtaments did not ſee the full meaning of the glorious declarations, which the holy ſpirit has delivered to us by their means; juſt as *Daniel*, and the other prophets, were ignorant of the full and preciſe import of their prophecies, relating to Chriſt. Or perhaps they did; but thought it expedient, or were commanded, not to be more explicit. The chriſtian religion, in converting the various pagan nations of the world, was to be corrupted by them; and the ſuperſtitious fear of God, which is one of theſe corruptions, may have been neceſſary hitherto on account of the reſt. But now the corruptions of the true religion begin to be diſcovered, and removed, by the

earneſt endeavours of good men of all nations and ſects, in theſe latter times, by their *comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual.*

How far the brute creation is concerned in the redemption by Chriſt, may be doubted; and it does not ſeem to be much or immediately our buſineſs to inquire, as no relative duty depends thereon. However, their fall with *Adam*, the covenant made with them after the deluge, their ſerving as ſacrifices for the ſins of men, and as types and emblems in the prophecies, their being commanded to praiſe God (for every thing that hath breath is thus commanded, as well as the Gentiles), ſeem to intimate, that there is mercy in ſtore for them alſo, more than we may expect, to be revealed in due time. The *Jews* conſidered the *Gentiles* as dogs in compariſon of themſelves. And the brute creatures appear by the foregoing hiſtory of aſſociation to differ from us in degree, rather than in kind.

It may be objected here, that, if this opinion of the ultimate happineſs of all mankind be true, it is not, however, proper to publiſh it. Men are very wicked, notwithſtanding the fear of eternal puniſhment; and therefore will probably be more ſo, if that fear be removed, and a hope given to the moſt wicked of attaining everlaſting happineſs ultimately. I anſwer, Firſt, That this opinion is already publiſhed ſo far, that very few irreligious perſons can be ſuppoſed to believe the contrary much longer: or, if they do believe abſolutely eternal puniſhment to be the doctrine of the ſcriptures, they will be much induced thereby to reject revealed religion itſelf. It ſeems therefore to be now a proper time to inquire candidly and impartially into the truth. The world abounds ſo much with writers, that the mere opinion of a ſingle one cannot be ſuppoſed to have any great weight. The arguments produced will themſelves be examined, and a perſon can now do little more than

than bring things to view for the judgment of others. The number of teachers in all arts and ſciences is ſo great, that no one amongſt them can or ought to have followers, unleſs as far as he follows truth.

But, Secondly, It does not ſeem, that even the motives of fear are leſſened to conſiderate perſons, by ſuppoſing the fire of hell to be only a purifying one. For it is clear from the ſcriptures, that the puniſhment will be very dreadful and durable. We can ſet no bounds either to the degree or duration of it. They are therefore practically infinite.

Thirdly, The motives of love are infinitely enhanced by ſuppoſing the ultimate unlimited happineſs of all. This takes off the charge of enthuſiaſm from that noble expreſſion of ſome myſtical writers, in which they reſign themſelves entirely to God, both for time and eternity. This makes us embrace even the moſt wicked with the moſt cordial, tender, humble affection. We pity them at preſent, as *veſſels of wrath*; yet live in certain hopes of rejoicing with them at laſt; labour to bring this to paſs, and to haſten it; and conſider, that every thing is good, and pure, and perfect, in the ſight of God.

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE now gone through with my obſervations on the frame, duty, and expectations of MAN, finiſhing them with the doctrine of ultimate, unlimited happineſs to all. This doctrine, if it be true, ought at once to diſpel all gloominеſs, anxiety, and ſorrow, from our hearts; and raiſe them to the higheſt pitch of love, adoration, and gratitude towards God, our moſt bountiful creator, and merciful father, and the inexhauſtible ſource of all happineſs and perfection. Here ſelf-intereſt, benevolence, and piety, all concur to move and exalt our affections. How happy in himſelf, how benevolent to others, and how thankful to God, ought that man to be, who believes both himſelf and others born to an infinite expectation! Since God has bid us rejoice, what can make us ſorrowful? Since he has created us for happineſs, what miſery can we fear? If we be really intended for ultimate unlimited happineſs, it is no matter to a truly reſigned perſon, when, or where, or how. Nay, could any of us fully conceive, and be duly influenced by, this glorious expectation, this infinite balance in our favour, it would be ſufficient to deprive all preſent evils of their ſting and bitterneſs. It would be a ſufficient anſwer to the πόθεν τὸ κακὸν, to all our difficulties and anxieties from the folly, vice, and miſery, which we experience in ourſelves, and ſee in others, to ſay, that they will all end

end in unbounded knowledge, virtue, and happineſs; and that the progreſs of every individual in his paſſage through an eternal life is from imperfect to perfect, particular to general, leſs to greater, finite to infinite, and from the creature to the Creator.

But, alas! this is chiefly ſpeculation, and muſt be to the bulk of mankind. Whilſt we continue entangled in the fetters of ſin, we cannot enjoy the glorious liberty and privileges of the children of God. We cannot exalt ourſelves to heaven, and make a right eſtimate of things, from the true point of view, till we get clear of the attraction, and magic influences of the earth. Whence it follows, that this doctrine, however great and glorious in itſelf, in the eye of a being ſufficiently advanced in purity and comprehenſion, muſt be to us like the book given to St. *John, bitter in the belly*, though *ſweet in the mouth*. The firſt general view cannot but charm us, however groveling and corrupt our minds may be. But when we begin to digeſt it, when, after mature deliberation, we come to ſee its ſeveral evidences, connections, and conſequences, our ſelf-intereſt, our benevolence, and our piety, in proportion to their ſtrength and purity, will all riſe up, and join their forces, and alarm us to the utmoſt extent of our faculties. When we conſider the purity required of thoſe, who are ſo happy as to eſcape the ſecond death, and the purifying lake of fire, whoſe ſmoke aſcendeth up for ever and ever, *i. e.* for ages of ages, we cannot but be in pain for ourſelves, and work out our own ſalvation with fear and trembling. When we view the ſin and wickedneſs, with which the world every where abounds, our hearts cannot but melt with compaſſion for others, for the tortures that are prepared for them, after the expiration of this life, in order to fit them for pure and ſpiritul happineſs, to burn out the ſtains of ſenſuality and ſelf-love, and exalt them to the unbounded

love of God, and his works. When we conſider farther, that God has mercy on whom he will, and hardens whom he will, and that we, with all our pleaſures and pains, are abſolute nothings in compariſon of him, we muſt, like St. *John* again, fall down at his feet dead with aſtoniſhment. And yet we need not fear; from the inſtant that we thus humble ourſelves, he will lay his hand upon us, and exalt us; he has the keys of death and hell, in every poſſible ſenſe of thoſe words.

There is alſo another conſideration, which, though of leſs moment than the foregoing, is yet abundantly ſufficient to move the compaſſion of the good, and alarm the fears of the wicked; I mean the temporal evils and woes, which will probably fall upon the nominally chriſtian ſtates of theſe weſtern parts, the chriſtian *Babylon*, before the great revolution predicted in the ſcriptures, before the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Chriſt. Theſe evils will be brought upon us by our exceſs of wickedneſs, juſt as the deluge was upon the old world, and the deſtruction of *Sodom* upon its lewd inhabitants, through theirs; they may alſo be ſomewhat delayed, or alleviated, by reformations public or private, even partial and temporary ones. I will therefore make a few ſhort remarks concerning ſuch things, as ſeem more particularly to call for the attention of the preſent chriſtian world; at leaſt of thoſe good *Philadelphians*, who are deſirous to keep themſelves and others from that hour of temptation, which is coming upon us *all*. *My remarks muſt be ſuppoſed* to relate chiefly to this kingdom; to be ſuggeſted by what occurs in it; and to be calculated, as far as my poor, but ſincere and earneſt endeavours can have any weight, to ſtem for a while that torrent of vice and impiety, which ſeem ready to ſwallow us up, and, if poſſible, to protract the life of the body politic. But I preſume,

preſume, that the reſemblance between all the ſtates of *chriſtendom* is ſo great in all the points here conſidered, that the practical conſequences are the ſame upon the whole.

There are ſix things, which ſeem more eſpecially to threaten ruin and diſſolution to the preſent ſtates of *chriſtendom*.

Firſt, The great growth of atheiſm and infidelity, particularly amongſt the governing part of theſe ſtates.

Secondly, The open and abandoned lewdneſs, to which great numbers of both ſexes, eſpecially in the high ranks of life, have given themſelves up.

Thirdly, The ſordid and avowed ſelf-intereſt, which is almoſt the ſole motive of action in thoſe who are concerned in the adminiſtration of public affairs.

Fourthly, The licentiouſneſs and contempt of every kind of authority, divine and human, which is ſo notorious in inferiors of all ranks.

Fifthly, The great worldly-mindedneſs of the clergy, and their groſs neglects in the diſcharge of their proper functions

Sixthly, The careleſſneſs and infatuation of parents and magiſtrates with reſpect to the education of youth, and the conſequent early corruption of the riſing generation.

All theſe things have evident mutual connections and influences; and, as they all ſeem likely to increaſe from time to time, ſo it can ſcarce be doubted by a conſiderate man, whether he be a religious one or no, but that they will, ſooner or later, bring on a total diſſolution of all the forms of government, that ſubſiſt at preſent in the chriſtian countries of *Europe*. I will note down ſome of the principal facts of each kind, and ſhew their utter inconſiſtency with the

the welfare of a body politic, and their neceſſary tendency to anarchy and confuſion.

I begin with the atheiſm and infidelity which prevail ſo much among the governing part of theſe weſtern kingdoms. That infidelity prevails, eſpecially in theſe kingdoms, will readily be acknowledged by all. But the ſame perſons, who treat the chriſtian religion, and its advocates, with ſo much ſcorn, will probably, ſome of them at leaſt, profeſs a regard to natural religion; and it may ſeem hard to queſtion their ſincerity. However, as far as has occurred to my obſervation, theſe perſons either deceive themſelves, or attempt to deceive others, in this. There appears in them no love or fear of God, no confidence in him, no delight in meditating upon him, in praying to him, or praiſing him, no hope or joy in a future ſtate. Their hearts and treaſures are upon this earth, upon ſenſual pleaſures, or vain amuſements, perhaps of philoſophy or philology, purſued to paſs the time, upon honour or riches. And indeed there are the ſame objections, in general, to natural religion as to revealed, and no ſtronger evidences for it. On the contrary, the hiſtorical and moral evidences for the general truth of the ſcriptures, which theſe perſons deny, are more convincing and ſatisfactory to philoſophical as well as to vulgar capacities, than the arguments that are uſually brought to prove the exiſtence and attributes of God, his providence, or a future ſtate: not but that theſe laſt are abundantly ſufficient to ſatisfy an earneſt and impartial inquirer.

If now there really be a God, who is our natural and moral governor, and who expects, that we ſhould regard him as ſuch, thoſe magiſtrates who care not to have him in their thoughts, to ſuffer him to interfere in their ſcheme of government, who *ſay in their hearts, there is no God*, or wiſh it, or even bid open defiance to him (though I hope and believe this

this laſt is not often the caſe), cannot proſper; but muſt bring down vengeance upon themſelves, and the wicked nations over whom they preſide. In like manner, if God has ſent his beloved ſon Jeſus Chriſt to be an example to the world, to die for it, and to govern it, it cannot be an indifferent thing whether we attend to his call or no. The neglect of revealed religion, eſpecially in perſons of authority, is the ſame thing as declaring it to be falſe; for, if true, the neglect of it is, as one may ſay, high treaſon againſt the majeſty of heaven. He that honours not the Son, cannot honour the Father, who hath ſent him with ſufficient credentials. And accordingly, if we conſider the ſecond pſalm as a prophecy relating to Chriſt, which it certainly is, thoſe kings and magiſtrates, who riſe up againſt God and his Chriſt, intending to ſhake off the reſtraints of natural and revealed religion, muſt expect to be broken in pieces like a potter's veſſel. Since they will not *kiſs the Son*, and *rejoice before him with reverence*, they muſt expect, that he will *rule over them with a rod of iron*.

Nay, we may go farther, and affirm, that if there were no ſatisfactory evidence for natural or revealed religion, ſtill it is the intereſt of princes and governors to improve that which there is to the beſt advantage. The happineſs of their people, their own intereſt with them, their power, their ſafety, their all, depend upon it. Neither is this any intricate, far fetched, or doubtful poſition, but a truth which lies upon the ſurface of things, which is evident at firſt ſight, and undeniable after the moſt thorough examination. So that for governors to render religion contemptible in the eyes of their ſubjects, by example or inſinuation, and much more by directly ridiculing or vilifying it, is manifeſt infatuation; it is ſeeing without perceiving, and hearing without underſtanding, through the groſſneſs and carnality

carnality of their hearts. And it may be part of the infatuation predicted to come upon the wicked in the latter ages of the world. For then the *wicked ſhall do wickedly, and none of the wicked ſhall underſtand.*

Religion is often ſaid by unbelievers, to have been the invention of wiſe law-givers, and artful politicians, in order to keep the vicious and head-ſtrong multitude in awe. How little does the practice of the preſent times ſuit with this! The adminiſtrators of public affairs in the preſent times are not even wiſe or artful enough to take advantage of a pure religion, handed down to them from their anceſtors, and which they certainly did not invent; but endeavour to explode it at the manifeſt hazard of all that is dear to them. For mankind can never be kept in ſubjection to government, but by the hopes and fears of another world; nay, the expreſs precepts, promiſes, and threatenings of the goſpel are requiſite for this purpoſe. The unwritten law of nature is too pliable, too ſubtle, and too feeble; a diſhoneſt heart can eaſily explain it, or its motives, away; and violent paſſions will not ſuffer it to be heard; whereas the precepts of revealed religion are abſolute and expreſs, and its motives alarming to the higheſt degree, where the ſcriptures are received and conſidered, in any meaſure, as they ought to be.

The *Greek* and *Roman* philoſophy and morality was not indeed equal to ours; but we may have a ſufficient ſpecimen from thence, how little very good doctrines, when taught without authority, are able to check the growing corruption of mankind. Had not chriſtianity intervened at the declenſion of the *Roman* empire, and put a ſtop to the career of vice, the whole body politic of the civilized nations of that empire, muſt have been diſſolved from the mere wickedneſs and corruption of its ſeveral parts. And much rather may the ſame come upon

upon us, if after ſuch light and evidence we caſt off the reſtraints and motives of revealed religion.

I would not be underſtood to ſpeak here to thoſe alone, who are legally the governors of the nations of *chriſtendom*, *i. e.* who have a particular legiſlative or executive power veſted in them by the conſtitutions or cuſtoms of their reſpective countries; but alſo to all ſuch as by their eminence in any way, their learning, their titles, their riches, &c. draw the world after them. And it ſeems requiſite to remind the two learned profeſſions of law and phyſic, that though they are no ways qualified to judge of the evidence for religion, unleſs they have examined it carefully, *i. e.* with the ſame attention and impartiality, as they would do a matter of law or phyſic, where it is their intereſt to form a right judgment (in which caſe there ſeems to be no doubt but they will determine for it); yet the illiterate part of mankind will eaſily catch the infection from them on account of their general, confuſed reputation of being learned, and by means of the plauſible ways of haranguing and deſcanting upon topics, to which they are formed by their educations and profeſſions. And thus, whether they attend to it or no, they become the ſeducers of mankind, and rocks of offence to the weak and ignorant, and load themſelves with the guilt of other men's ſins. This caution is ſo much the more neceſſary, as it is common for young ſtudents in theſe profeſſions to liſt themſelves on the ſide of irreligion, and become nominal infidels of courſe, and from faſhion, as it were; and without pretending, as indeed there could be no reaſonable pretence, to have examined into the merits of the cauſe. Which blind and implicit faith in the blind, in one does not know what or whom, would be moſt unaccountable in thoſe who profeſs infidelity, were it not, that this is in every other inſtance a contradiction to itſelf, and muſt be ſo, on

account of the wilful infatuation from which it ariſes.

I will now ſhew briefly how the prevalence of infidelity increaſes, and is increaſed by, the other evils here mentioned. That it opens a door to lewdneſs, cannot be doubted by any one; and indeed the ſtrictneſs and purity of the chriſtian religion, in this reſpect, is probably the chief thing, which makes vicious men firſt fear and hate, and then vilify and oppoſe it. The unwritten law of nature cannot fix preciſe bounds to the commerce between the ſexes. This is too wide a field, as I have obſerved above; and yet it highly approves of chaſtity in thought, word, and deed. If therefore men reject only revealed religion, great libertiniſm muſt enſue; but if they reject natural alſo, which is generally the caſe, we can expect nothing but the moſt abandoned diſſoluteneſs.

As to ſelf-intereſt, we may obſerve, that thoſe who have no hopes in futurity, no piety towards God, and conſequently no ſolid or extenſive benevolence towards men, cannot but be engroſſed by the moſt ſordid and groveling kind, that which reſts in preſent poſſeſſions and enjoyments. And, converſely, when ſuch a ſelf-intereſt has taken root, they muſt be averſe to religion, becauſe it opens diſtant and ungrateful views to them, and inculcates the pure and diſintereſted love of God, and their neighbour; to them an enthuſiaſtic and impoſſible project.

In like manner infidelity muſt diſpoſe men to ſhake off the yoke of authority, to unbounded licentiouſneſs; and reciprocally is itſelf the natural conſequence of every degree of licentiouſneſs. Thoſe who do not regard the ſupreme authority, can be little expected to regard any of his vicegerents; thoſe who do not fear God, will not honour the king. If the infatuation of princes was not of the deepeſt kind, they

they could not but ſee, that they hold their dominions entirely by the real chriſtianity that is left amongſt us; and that, if they do ſucceed in taking away this foundation, or weakening it much farther, their governments muſt fall, like houſes built upon ſand. Beſides the great influence which chriſtianity has to make men humble and obedient, it is to be conſidered, that our anceſtors have ſo interwoven it with the conſtitutions of the kingdoms of *Europe*, that they muſt ſtand or fall together. Chriſtianity is the cement of the buildings.

It is alſo evident, that the infidelity of the laity muſt have an ill effect in reſpect of the clergy. Many of theſe muſt be the ſons of infidels, thruſt into the church by their parents for ſubſiſtence, or with a view to great honours and profits; and muſt carry with them a deep tincture of the corruption and infidelity, which they imbibed in their infancy and youth. And it is not leſs evident, that the worldly-mindedneſs and neglect of duty in the clergy is a great ſcandal to religion, and cauſe of infidelity; the chief probably after the impatience of reſtraint in reſpect of chaſtity in the laity. It is alſo to be conſidered, that unbelieving magiſtrates will have little regard to the piety of the perſons, whom they promote to the higheſt ſtations of the church, but rather to their flattery, ſubſerviency, and apparent political uſefulneſs.

Laſtly, As to the perverted education of youth, atheiſm and infidelity are both the cauſe and effect of this in ſo obvious a manner, that it ſeems ſuperfluous to enlarge upon it.

The lewdneſs which I have mentioned above, as a ſecond cauſe of the future diſſolution of theſe weſtern kingdoms, is now riſen to ſuch a height, as almoſt to threaten utter confuſion. Men glory in their ſhame, and publicly avow what in former ages was induſtriouſly concealed. Princes are juſtly charge-

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able with a great part of this public guilt. Their courts will imitate them, in what is bad at leaſt; and be led on thereby from one degree of ſhameleſsneſs to another. The evil increaſes gradually; for neither courts, nor private perſons, become quite profligate at once; and this may make ſome almoſt perſuade themſelves, that the preſent times are not worſe than the preceding. The ſins of this kind are, for the moſt part, joined with idolatry in the prophetical writings, and made the types thereof. So that the open and avowed practice of them is an open renunciation of our allegiance to God and Chriſt; and, agreeably to this, is, as has been obſerved above, the principal cauſe why ſo many perſons reject revealed religion. But if we renounce our allegiance and covenant, we can be no longer under the protection of God.

The groſs ſelf-intereſt, which is now the principal motive in moſt marriages in high life, is both a cauſe and conſequence of this libertiniſm. The ſame may be obſerved of the great contempt, in which marriage is held, and which almoſt threatens promiſcuous concubinage among the higher ranks, and the profeſſed unbelievers.

As to the clergy, if they neglect to admoniſh princes and great men through fear, and ſervile intereſt, a great part of the national guilt will lie at their doors; and, if they become, in general, infected with this vice (which indeed is not the caſe now; but may perhaps hereafter, as all things grow worſe); it will ſoon be the entire ſubverſion of the external form of church government; however certain it be, that the church of thoſe, who *worſhip God in ſpirit, and in truth*, will prevail againſt the gates of hell.

The third great evil likely to haſten our ruin is the ſelf-intereſt, which prevails ſo much amongſt thoſe, to whom the adminiſtration of public affairs

is

is committed. It ſeems that bodies politic are in this particular, as in many others, analogous to individuals, that they grow more ſelfiſh, as they decline.

As things now are, one can ſcarce expect, that, in any impending danger, thoſe who have it in their power to ſave a falling ſtate, will attempt it, unleſs there be ſome proſpect of gain to themſelves. And, while they barter and caſt about for the greateſt advantages to themſelves, the evil will become paſt remedy. Whether or no it be poſſible to adminiſter public affairs upon upright and generous principles, after ſo much corruption has already taken place, may perhaps be juſtly queſtioned. However, if it cannot be now, much leſs can it be hereafter; and if this evil increaſes much more in this country, there is reaſon to fear, that an independent populace may get the upper hand, and overſet the ſtate. The wheels of government are already clogged ſo much, that it is difficult to tranſact the common neceſſary affairs, and almoſt impoſſible to make a good law.

The licentiouſneſs of inferiors of all ranks, which is the fourth great evil, runs higher in this country perhaps, than in any other. However, the infection will probably ſpread. The inferiors in other countries cannot but envy and imitate thoſe in this; and that more and more every day, as all mutual intercourſes are enlarged. The ſelf-intereſt juſt ſpoken of contributes greatly to this evil, the inſolence of the populace againſt one party of their ſuperiors being ſupported, and even encouraged, by the other, from intereſted views of diſplacing their oppoſites. Let it be obſerved alſo, that the laity of high rank, by ridiculing and inſulting their ſuperiors in the church, have had a great ſhare in introducing the ſpirit of univerſal diſobedience, and contempt of authority, amongſt the inferior orders, in this nation.

The wicked and notoriouſly falſe calumnies, which are ſpread about concerning the royal family by the diſaffected party in this country, may be ranked under this evil. Thoſe who ſcruple to take the oaths required by the preſent government, ought at leaſt to ſeek the peace of the country, where they live in peace, and the quiet enjoyment of their poſſeſſions. However, the crime of ſuch as take the oaths, and ſtill vilify, is much greater, and one of the higheſt offences that can be offered to the divine Majeſty.

That worldly-mindedneſs, and neglect of duty, in the clergy, muſt haſten our ruin, cannot be doubted. Theſe are *the ſalt of the earth*, and *the light of the world*. If they loſe their ſavour, the whole nation, where this happens, will be coverted into one putrid maſs; if their light become darkneſs, the whole body politic muſt be dark alſo. The degeneracy of the court of *Rome*, and ſecular biſhops abroad, are too notorious to be mentioned. They almoſt ceaſe to give offence, as they ſcarce pretend to any function or authority, beſides what is temporal. Yet ſtill there is great mockery of God in their external pomp, and profanation of ſacred titles; which, ſooner or later, will bring down vengeance upon them. And as the court of *Rome* has been at the head of the great apoſtaſy and corruption of the chriſtian church, and ſeems evidently marked out in various places of the ſcriptures, the ſevereſt judgments are probably reſerved for her.

But I rather chooſe to ſpeak to what falls under the obſervation of all ſerious, attentive perſons in this kingdom. The ſuperior clergy are, in general, ambitious, and eager in the purſuit of riches; flatterers of the great, and ſubſervient to party intereſt; negligent of their own immediate charges, and alſo of the inferior clergy, and their immediate charges. The inferior clergy imitate their ſuperiors, and, in general,

general, take little more care of their pariſhes, than barely what is neceſſary to avoid the cenſure of the law. And the clergy of all ranks are, in general, either ignorant; or, if they do apply, it is rather to profane learning, to philoſophical or political matters, than to the ſtudy of the ſcriptures, of the oriental languages, of the fathers, and eccleſiaſtical authors, and of the writings of devout men in different ages of the church. I ſay this is, in general, the caſe, *i. e.* far the greater part of the clergy of all ranks in this kingdom are of this kind. But there are ſome of a quite different character, men eminent for piety, ſacred learning, and the faithful diſcharge of their duty, and who, it is not to be doubted, mourn in ſecret for the crying ſins of this and other nations. The clergy, in general, are alſo far more free from open and groſs vices, than any other denomination of men amongſt us, phyſicians, lawyers, merchants, ſoldiers, &c. However, this may be otherwiſe hereafter. For it is ſaid, that in ſome foreign countries the ſuperior clergy, in others the inferior, are as corrupt and abandoned, or more ſo, than any other order of men. The clergy in this kingdom ſeem to be what one might expect from the mixture of good and bad influences that affect them. But then, if we make this candid allowance for them, we muſt alſo make it for perſons in the high ranks of life, for their infidelity, lewdneſs, and ſordid ſelf-intereſt. And though it becomes an humble, charitable, and impartial man, to make all theſe allowances; yet he cannot but ſee, that the judgments of God are ready to fall upon us all for theſe things; and that they may fall firſt, and with the greateſt weight, upon thoſe, who, having the higheſt office committed to them in the ſpiritual kingdom of Chriſt, neglect it, and are become mere *merchants of the earth*, and *ſhepherds, that feed themſelves, and not their flocks.*

How greatly might the face of things be changed in this kingdom, were any number of the ſuperior, or even of the inferior clergy, to begin to diſcharge their reſpective functions with true chriſtian zeal, courage, and fidelity! The earneſtneſs of ſome might awaken and excite others, and the whole lump be leavened. At leaſt, we might hope to delay or alleviate the miſeries, that threaten us. Why are not all the poor taught to read the Bible, all inſtructed in the church catechiſm, ſo as to have ſuch principles of religion early inſtilled into them, as would enable them to take delight in, and to profit by, the Bible, and practical books of religion? Why are not all the ſick viſited, the feeble-minded comforted, the unruly warned? And why do not miniſters go about, thus doing good, and ſeeking out thoſe who want their aſſiſtance? Why do not the ſuperior clergy inquire into theſe things, puniſh and diſcourage all negligent pariſh miniſters, reward and promote thoſe that are pious and diligent? Let thoſe worthy clergymen, who lament the degeneracy of their own order, inform the public what is practicable and fitting to be done in theſe things. I can only deliver general remarks, ſuch as occur to a by-ſtander.

There are great complaints made of the irregularities of the methodiſts, and, I believe, not without reaſon. The ſureſt means to check theſe irregularities is, for the clergy to learn from the methodiſts what is good in them, to adopt their zeal, and concern for loſt ſouls: this would ſoon unite all that are truly good amongſt the methodiſts to the clergy, and diſarm ſuch as are otherwiſe. And if the methodiſts will hearken to one, who means ſincerely well to all parties, let me entreat them to reverence their ſuperiors, to avoid ſpiritual ſelfiſhneſs, and zeal for particular phraſes and tenets, and not to ſow diviſions in pariſhes and families, but to be peace-

peace-makers, as they hope to be called the children of God. The whole world will never be converted, but by thoſe who are of a truly catholic ſpirit. Let me entreat all parties as a ſincere friend and lover of all, not to be offended with the great, perhaps unjuſtifiable freedom, which I have uſed, but to lay to heart the charges here brought, to examine how far they are true, and reform wherever they are found to be ſo.

If the ſtate of things in this and other nations be, in any meaſure, what I have above deſcribed, it is no wonder, that the education of youth ſhould be groſsly perverted and corrupted, ſo that one may juſtly fear, that every ſubſequent generation will exceed that which went before it in degeneracy and wickedneſs, till ſuch time as the great tribulation come. Vicious parents cannot be ſenſible of the importance and neceſſity of a good and religious education, in order to make their children happy. They muſt corrupt them not only by their examples, but by many other ways, direct as well as indirect. As infidelity now ſpreads amongſt the female ſex, who have the care of both ſexes during their infancy, it is to be feared, that many children will want the very elements of religion; be quite ſtrangers to the ſcriptures, except as they ſometimes hear them ridiculed; and be ſavages as to the internal man, as to their moral and religious knowledge and behaviour; and be diſtinguiſhed from them chiefly by the feeble reſtraints of external politeneſs and decorum. It is evident from common obſervation, and more ſo from the foregoing theory, that children may be formed and moulded as we pleaſe. When therefore they prove vicious and miſerable, the guilt lies at our doors, as well as theirs; and, on the contrary, he who educates a ſon, or a daughter, in the ways of piety and virtue, confers the higheſt obligation both upon his child, and upon the riſing generation;

and

and may be the inſtrument of ſalvation, temporal and eternal, to multitudes.

There are two things here, which deſerve more particular attention, viz. the education of the clergy, and that of princes.

As to the firſt, one cannot but wonder, how it is poſſible for the many ſerious and judicious clergymen, who have the care of youth in public ſchools and univerſities, to be ſo negligent of the principal point, their moral and religious behaviour; and that eſpecially as the regulation of this would make all other parts of education go on with ſo much more eaſe and ſucceſs: how ſchool-maſters can ſtill perſiſt in teaching lewd poets after the remoſtrances of pious men againſt this practice, and the evident ill conſequences: how the tutors in the univerſities can permit ſuch open debauchery, as is often practiſed there: and how ſacred learning, which ſurely is the chief thing for ſcholars intended for the chriſtian miniſtry, can be allowed ſo ſmall a ſhare of time and pains, both in ſchools, and in the univerſities. But, as I ſaid before of the clergy in general, let thoſe ſchool-maſters and tutors, who have religion at heart, ſpeak fully to this point. I ſhall ſubmit my own judgment in both caſes, entirely to the better judgment of pious men, that are converſant in theſe things.

As to the education of princes, the caſe is every thing but deſperate; ſo that one could ſcarce think of mentioning it, were it not for the great change in the face of things, which would immediately enſue, if but ſo much as one ſovereign prince would ſet aſide all ſelf-regards, and devote himſelf entirely to the promotion of religion, and the ſervice of mankind. I do not at all mean to intimate, that princes are worſe than other men, proper allowances being made. On the contrary, I ſuppoſe they are juſt the ſame. And they have an undoubted right

to

to the greateſt candour, and compaſſion from their ſubjects, on account of the extraordinary difficulties and temptations, with which they are beſet, as well as to the moſt profound reverence, and entire obedience.

Theſe are my real and earneſt ſentiments upon theſe points. It would be great raſhneſs to fix a time for the breaking of the ſtorm that hangs over our heads, as it is blindneſs and infatuation not to ſee it; not to be aware, that it may break. And yet this infatuation has always attended all falling ſtates. The kingdoms of *Judah* and *Iſrael*, which are the types of all the reſt, were thus infatuated. It may be, that the prophecies concerning *Edom*, *Moab*, *Ammon*, *Tyre*, *Egypt*, &c. will become applicable to particular kingdoms before their fall, and warn the good to flee out of them. And *chriſtendom*, in general, ſeems ready to aſſume to itſelf the place and lot of the *Jews*, after they had rejected their Meſſiah the ſaviour of the world. Let no one deceive himſelf or others. The preſent circumſtances of the world are extraordinary and critical, beyond what has ever yet happened. If we refuſe to let Chriſt reign over us, as our redeemer and ſaviour, we muſt be ſlain before his face, as enemies, at his ſecond coming.

END OF DR. HARTLEY'S WORK.

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